they talked to a stranger

by

Len O'Connor

Introduction by Senator Paul H. Douglas

THEY TALKED TO A STRANGER

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With an introduction by Senator Paul H. Douglas

> "If you ask me, they are afraid of the kids. The coppers and their folks, and everybody. And the reason is everybody's plenty dirty and everybody's got a racket."

Prize-winning reporter Len O'Connor was in no way surprised by the uncompromising contempt of nineteen-year old "Mr. Slick." Indicted at the age of thirteen for burglary, "Mr. Slick" spent his high-school years as an inmate of the Illinois Industrial School for Boys. It is to this institution that the worst of the juvenile offenders—the thieves, rapists, and murderers, are sent. The same remark might have been made by:

> "*The Loner*"—now nineteen, this boy's criminal record goes back ten years . . .
> "*Moustache*"—at sixteen he will now begin serving a life sentence for the murder of a policeman . . .
> "*Baseball*"—who was in the first year of high school when he ran afoul of the law. "Baseball" added his own comment:
> "All you 'goody' guys hollerin' about crime! Everybody's got a racket . . . everybody's trying to beat somebody else. How you expect that the kids gonna be different?"

This startling, starkly dramatic book incorporates the 'unedited' disclosures of ten teen-age criminals, whose crimes range from 'cop killing' to Bible stealing and dope pushing. These ten boys and their case histories were selected from hundreds interviewed and tape recorded on the spot by Len O'Connor, as the most revealing cases of juvenile delinquency.

Harsh, cynical, already skilled in crime, these boys, whose ages range from sixteen to twenty-two years,

(Continued on back flap)

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They Talked to a Stranger

LEN O'CONNOR

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For
Edward J. De Witt

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Introduction

This is a remarkable book by a remarkable man. Len O'Connor is a veteran Chicago reporter who, in appearance and superficial manner, seems to be modeled upon the traditions which Ben Hecht made famous thirty years ago in *The Front Page*. It would be hard for anyone to lie successfully to Len.

But underneath the somewhat cynical exterior is a warm, compassionate and sympathetic heart. So, when he set out to interview a number of boys who were in deep trouble with society and the law, he was able to get at not merely the bare chronicle of their lives but also the deeper realities of environment, motives and aims.

The boys could not fool him and they knew that basically he was on their side. He was questioning them not for headlines but for understanding. Somehow, he was able to get the boys to talk fully and frankly. The result is unique.

Most studies of juvenile delinquency which I have read have been made and written from the outside. Thus, a sociologist, social worker, or criminologist will describe the case histories of the delinquents with the objectivity which an entomologist would show in studying ants or beetles. Mr. O'Connor, however, gets at the very insides of his subjects and not only describes what they did but why they did it.

I started to read the proof-sheets of this book on an evening when I was exhausted by a hard week's work. But, reading on in fascinated horror as the sordid tragedies unfolded, I found that I could not stop. I suspect that the readers of this book will have a similar experience.

The stories of these youngsters who went wrong so grievously will fill us all with sorrow and sympathy. They will inevitably make us more understanding and, I hope, more de-

termined to try in a constructive manner to save other boys and girls from such a fate. For without ignoring the fact of human weakness and perhaps of hereditary failings, the record shows how most never had a real chance because of circumstances beyond their control. Either they had no parents or only one, or their fathers and mothers were worse than none at all. Perhaps their fathers and mothers, in turn, were partially doomed by their environment.

The homes in which the youngsters lived were tawdry and unkempt. Churches and religion apparently did not enter into their lives, and clubs for boys and girls were not for them. They had little chance for wholesome play. There were no books in their homes. They seldom, if ever, were able to relax in the quiet of nature and to appreciate the mysteries and beauties of the skies and of growing and living things. They had only the streets—drab and unclean—on which to play, and only youngsters as wild and uncared for as themselves with whom to associate. Most of all, they inevitably felt lonely, unloved and rejected by their families, their neighborhoods and society. This was still further intensified for the Negro boys and girls by the racial antagonism shown toward them by most of the white community. It is the same with the Mexican-American and Indian youth of the Southwest and with the Puerto Ricans in New York.

Youth, moreover, is a period of turmoil, and youngsters have a huge appetite for thrills and for excitement. But there were few such legitimate opportunities for these kids. They seldom played baseball or basketball and almost never skated. Therefore, what was more inevitable than that, in order to light up the monotony and isolation of their lives and to show their girls a good time, they should drift into stealing cars? For this gave them the thrills, the speed of movement and the chance to show off before their peers. But it led to the juvenile court, to being tagged as delinquents, to the reform school, and thence probably to a life of crime.

It is the supreme merit of this book that it makes us suffer with these poor outcasts and causes us also to resolve to help this and coming generations of youth from going through the same experiences. It should make us all realize the need to clean out our slums, which are the worst disgrace of our city life, and to see that the displaced families are decently housed. This will cost money but it will save countless lives and, by reducing the crime bill of society, will, I am confident, ultimately save money as well. Would that the socially blind could see this!

Certainly one lesson which above all others is crystal clear is the need for fathers and mothers to hold homes together and to lavish love and care upon their children. Then comes the need for parks and recreation areas, for organized games in all seasons of the year, and for the fellowship and good-sportsmanship which sports and clubs create. What a need opens up for groups such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts! And the churches can be of tremendous aid if—to a greater degree than now—they will reach out to those who do not come to them. And to the degree that neighborhoods can organize themselves, as the Back-of-the-Yards Council has done in Chicago, neighborliness and fellowship will replace isolation and rejection.

I also believe that we can profitably set up a Youth Conservation Corps to provide youngsters with the chance to work in the Government parks and forests. This would accomplish much good in many different ways and I hope that this book will cause its readers to look more favorably upon this and other constructive proposals.

Someday, I hope Len O'Connor will write a second book—this time about the boys from the middle and upper class homes who nevertheless go astray and become delinquents. Because of the influence of their families, these boys are generally treated with a degree of mercy which is not accorded

to the children of the disinherited. And yet, despite all the surface advantages of their homes, many boys from the well-to-do suburbs and residential sections do commit acts of delinquency, even though only a few may be punished for them.

It would make equally fascinating reading if we could find out what caused these favored children to get into trouble. I would hazard the guess that family tensions, unloving homes, over-protective mothers, and the general dullness of the life about them all play their part. All this may stimulate flaming youth, equipped with high-powered cars and ample spending money to seek thrills by speeding, liquor, sex and crime.

Over forty years ago, one of our wisest and noblest citizens, Jane Addams, in her *Spirit of Youth and City Streets,* stressed the need to make virtue attractive and indeed thrilling to youth, and not to allow the devil to have all the best tunes. We have not risen to the challenge of her life and writings.

It would be unpardonable if we were to continue in our slothful and callous indifference to the causes and consequences of what Len O'Connor here reveals. For the bright possibilities of infancy and childhood were never meant to flow into such poisonous cesspools as these.

A whole army of boys and girls speaks to us in these terrible pages. Would that their sordid stories might awaken our consciences and cause us to act boldly, constructively and with affection for the children of God who are now so easily led astray, but who are the most precious potential gifts which life gives to us.

Paul H. Douglas

THEY TALKED TO A STRANGER

1

The first boy : "Mustache"

PART 1

The First Boy who talked to a stranger murdered a cop. He was sixteen. A tall, thin, zooty boy with thick black hair folded over at the back of the head (in a style that the police call "duck's ass") held in place with a quantity of perfumed oil, and a thin line of mustache on the narrow lip of the small weak mouth. A nervous, dangerous, ill-mannered boy.

The detectives who were called in on his case looked carefully at the boy's picture on the WANTED pamphlet Homicide had prepared and, somewhat in derision, gave him the name, "Mustache."

Like most killers, Mustache was not primarily a killer; like most, he was a petty thief who had graduated to murder unexpectedly because of curious circumstances. And like most young killers, he was not stupid: he had worked out a plan of action when he found a lockup keeper's gun in a rare bit of bad luck, and his mind was working with persistent logic

during the forty-four hours of freedom he gained by shooting the cop.

There was system in his perversity when he was told, hours after re-capture, that the cop had died and that the charge was murder.

"You can't burn me," he said, privately trembling at fear he would get the chair, "I'm only a kid. They don't burn you for murder if you're a kid."

He was right. They don't.

At the moment of re-capture, the boy was not a killer. The lockup keeper he shot was dying but not yet dead. Even so, the men who worked in that district with the lockup keeper were sure he would die and, when the frightened boy was brought in, they gathered about and observed him silently. Policemen in general have a disinterest in the psychology of most crimes and a tolerance for the person in custody; with the exception of vicious and revolting crimes, they have little judgmental feeling about the prisoner. To a policeman, the shooting of a policeman is a different matter. The shooting of a policeman is a personal thing; it brings into sharp focus the fact they try to forget—a cop never knows when someone may fire a fatal slug into him.

Mustache, who shot the lockup keeper, was guilty of this unique crime. He was walking proof that policemen live in the shadow of possible quick death. Yet not an unkind word was spoken to him as they brought him out to be questioned. There was no look of hate. Actually the policemen who came to look him over had a kind of compassion for the boy—just because he was a boy.

Two of Chicago's three supervising captains were present to look at Mustache: Robert Ryan and Jerome Looney. The district captain, Martin Mullen, was present too. A dozen or more policemen were there, including the detectives who made the arrest, some in uniform and some in what they call "soft clothes."

A lean, hard, sad-looking detective named Anthony J. Osterkorn and a fatherly type of juvenile officer named William Touhy, both of the Shakespeare District, had picked up the boy in Lincoln Park along the lake front, several miles from the Shakespeare Station.

There is nothing more urgent in the life of policemen than a search for someone who has shot a cop, and the search for the boy who shot the lockup keeper at Shakespeare and then fled into the night extended to all parts of the city—Homicide showering the districts the while with pictures and descriptive data on the boy wanted. At such times, squad cars go racing off on mysterious missions, even the vaguest kind of tip is thoroughly pursued, and there is visible excitement among the officers in charge of a search when a "good" piece of information is received.

The information that brought the search for Mustache to a climax came in a telephone call to Shakespeare Station from a terrified boy who claimed to be a pal of Mustache. The boy said he had had a phone call from Mustache, demanding that the boy get a .38 caliber gun and bring it to Mustache in Lincoln Park.

What had the boy told Mustache?

"I told him, sure, I would bring him the gun. I had to tell him or I don't know what he'd do to me."

Had Mustache told the boy exactly where he would meet him?

No. "He said he would find *me*; I was to come to the park with the gun and he would be waiting and he'd find me."

This was electrifying information. The boy who had called hung up before they could find out who he was, but they had no doubt at Shakespeare about the truth of what he had said. Although it was far from certain that Mustache would keep the rendezvous, teen-age criminals on the loose buzz around as unpredictably as house flies and there was a good gamble that he would try to find his friend.

Somewhere in the neighborhood, the terrified boy who called Shakespeare was getting out of a phone booth, depressed with dread that Mustache would escape the net in Lincoln Park and track him down as an informer. The officers at Shakespeare weren't thinking about the boy who had called; they were feverishly calling in detectives to set up a net from which Mustache could not escape.

When police are hunting for a wanted person, they order detectives to go into hiding near the places that the pursued is known to frequent. They call this a "stakeout" and, in the search for Mustache, they had a stakeout at his mother's home as well as at many other places. The men had kept these vigils for more than forty hours to no avail, but now the desk sergeant at Shakespeare was ordered to call the Police Radio Room at 11th and State and have calls put out on the short wave for squads on stakeout duty to contact the station. There was pressing need for plain-clothes men in Lincoln Park and the Radio Room started calling them in.

They were far from certain that Mustache would be found in the park, but if the informer had told the truth—if Mustache had plans to pick up a gun in Lincoln Park—he obviously would be roaming around and not holed up in some inaccessible place. It sharpens the interest of policemen when the man they are searching for is known to be on the loose and not in hiding.

Lincoln Park is a long trek from the district where the shooting of the cop took place; Mustache was taking a long chance in traveling so far to meet his friend and get the gun. Yet there would be thousands of people in the park—particularly on this day, a blistering Friday—and the park was a familiar place to Mustache; the police had learned, for example, that he habitually played tom cat in the park, meeting his girls at North Avenue Beach on the lakefront side.

An experienced criminal who was running from the law would have avoided Lincoln Park. It is a large park covering

many acres but most of its shrubbery has been cleared away to prevent concealment of illicit adventures and it offers virtually no avenue for quick escape if a wanted man is spotted.

The detectives in charge of the detail, Osterkorn and Touhy, looked with dismay at the mass of people in the park—great numbers of them constantly on the move toward North Avenue Beach or, in the opposite direction, toward the public transit buses at the intersection of Clark Street and North Avenue. There seemed little chance that Osterkorn, Touhy and the six detectives working with them could pluck Mustache out of a crowd like this. But it was here, near the beach, that Mustache was most likely to be found and it was here, in an area of perhaps one square mile, that the eight men concentrated their search. They kept at it for several hours, a tiring, frustrating, monotonous chore.

The detectives had no way of knowing it at the time but Mustache was also in the park—also in that one-square-mile area—and he too was hot and hungry. He was desperately searching for his friend, the boy who promised to bring him the gun, and Mustache had walked into a trap, with no choice but to take the calculated risk that his friend was an informer.

Mustache was aware that he risked capture in openly seeking contact with his friend. But he had a compulsion to get his hands on a gun. On that hot summer day, as one hour of his search for the boy with the gun melted into the next, he refused to admit that his friend would not come. He told himself that the boy must be having trouble getting the gun or that somehow he had been delayed getting to the park; he pushed out of his mind the horrifying possibility that his friend had the gun and had been picked up by the police en route to the park, that perhaps he had been pressured to "talk."

It is quite usual for the police to receive information in juvenile cases from other juveniles. A teenage gang may keep

silent with the pretext of "honor among thieves," but the simple fact is that when a single boy is in serious trouble there is no fraternal bond that will protect him. In this case, the boy who supplied the tip willingly faced the wrath of the other boy in preference to being sucked in as an accessory. And the boy who shot the cop anticipated that his friend might "finger" him but took a long chance that maybe he would not, so desperate was he to get his hands on that gun.

Mustache was not sure why he so wanted that gun. The boy might have had an instinct that he needed protection, or he might have felt need for a weapon to use on robberies to get the money to keep himself alive. Possibly it was mere bravado, a feeling that it would be heroic to have a gun in his pocket when the police grabbed him for shooting the cop. Or his need might have been a combination of all these.

In sickening despair, with anxiety welling up inside him as the hours passed, Mustache looked everywhere in the park for his friend. The sweat was running from him, tight lines of fright were working in his face, and anyone could tell by now just by looking at Mustache that there was something strange and desperate about the boy. But people in a park on a summer day are not there to look for panic in the face of a youngster and, to those of the twenty-five or thirty thousand people who might have glanced at him in Lincoln Park that day, this was just another zooty kid.

In the several hours Mustache was in the park—utterly convinced now that he could not go anywhere until he had that gun—he often passed within pistol range of Osterkorn, Touhy and the six other soft-clothes men who were looking for him. He wandered about the south end of Lincoln Park without system in his search, as they did in theirs.

In the simple geometry of two lines flowing without pattern in the same area, it was inevitable that their paths cross. A mature criminal would have been extremely careful to

avoid capture. The unpracticed boy walked right into the net.

Osterkorn and Touhy had been on the case with very brief rest for almost two days and they were dragging their feet, whipped by fatigue and heat, when suddenly, right there in front of them: the boy!

Osterkorn and Touhy saw him before he saw them. As casually as they could, they walked toward him, two deadpan men in sport shirts and gabardine trousers, right hands in trouser pockets, each with trigger finger on a snubnose .32. They were not afraid he would make a break and run; Osterkorn and Touhy had the six other detectives close by and one boy cannot escape eight men. But this was a boy who had shot one policeman and, if armed, might well shoot another.

Mustache became aware that he was trapped as the detectives, alerted by Osterkorn's and Touhy's movement toward him, now fanned out and began enclosing him in a circle, the eyes of each set upon the boy in a sweet-sour blend of conquest and lingering apprehension. The boy said later that he was so scared he could hardly breathe, that he figured they were all blazing with anger about his having shot the lockup keeper and were moving in to kill him.

At a distance of about seven feet, Osterkorn said gently, "All right, son; it's all over."

The boy said, "What's all over? What are you talking about, it's all over?"

Osterkorn said, "Don't start anything, son. You'll make it worse than it is."

The boy took his hands out of his pockets. "I think you've got the wrong guy," he said, less truculent now. "My name is . . ."

Osterkorn, who has been a policeman a long time, shook his head without taking his eyes from the boy's and said, "No, don't feed us any of that. It's all over."

The other detectives were closing in. Two or three had pistols in hand. The boy cried. "You've got me," he said. "I'm the one that shot the policeman."

They gave him a quick frisk and came up with eleven .38 caliber shells and a dirty handkerchief, some contraceptives, a package of cigarettes and a small amount of change. The wages of sin are puny when the criminal is a kid.

They put handcuffs on Mustache and walked him through the park to a squad car as hundreds of people stared, and they took him back to the Shakespeare Station, back to the lockup from which he had shot his way out less than forty-eight hours before.

There is no comfort in crime when you are caught and you have lost the sweetness of freedom. The misery of that moment is compounded if you are only a boy. The First Boy's misery was just about to begin.

PART 2

Osterkorn radioed Police Headquarters at 11th and State on the "two-way" that they had the boy in custody and were heading to Shakespeare in the squad car. Osterkorn was up front with the driver. Touhy was in back with the boy.

Osterkorn was in charge of the squad and he was up front for several reasons. The obvious reason is that the microphone of the two-way radio is hanging from the dashboard, right in front of the officer in charge if there is need to get or give information on a call from the Police Radio Room. Of even greater importance, the man beside the driver plays a vital role in avoiding collisions in a fast run on a hot call.

There is virtually no identification on bureau cars of the Chicago Police Department and the assignments of the two men in the front seat are clearly defined as the squad races to a scene. The driver must gauge his own chances in swing-

ing to the left of traffic, into the on-coming lanes, and in measuring the lag he needs to clear a busy intersection safely when the red lights and cross-traffic are against him. The driver rivets his attention on cross-traffic from the left as well as traffic directly ahead. He must also keep his left hand on the handle of the spotlight installed on the driver's side of the squad cars, and he must whip the spotlight from side to side day or night—a surprisingly effective warning device to on-coming traffic.

Meanwhile, the man in charge of the squad car, seated next to the driver, watches traffic on the right. The driver expects him to keep up a running commentary, identifying potentially dangerous cars by make, color and behavior: "Red Chevvy at the corner—Moving out—She's swinging wide—It's all right; she's holding. Big yellow semi, next block—O.K., he sees us; he's pulling up—Watch it! he's blocking that inner lane—No room to come over—" The driver will not risk even a look to the right until there is momentarily no danger from the left or directly ahead, or unless he is told that a collision on the right is imminent. The man in charge, up front with the driver, works the siren as well as watching right-hand traffic. This requires more talent than merely pushing a button, though the siren is worked off a button in the center of the dashboard—within reach of either man. A well-trained operator will only use the siren when it serves a purpose, and the trick is to vary the pitch rather than to let the siren cling to a single, penetrating note. Some people are tone deaf in certain ranges and big city acoustics have a tendency to smother or wash out a high note, a tendency the operator can guard against by making the pitch variable.

Speeding through heavy traffic in the heart of town, the two key men of a squad car are dependent, in making a journey safely, on their own wits and whatever divine assistance accrues to detectives who risk their lives to do a good

job. Traffic officers are expected to hold up all traffic at busy intersections upon the approach of an emergency vehicle but men in bureau cars do not count on this help. The man on the corner is often off his post at the critical moment, and many a traffic cop has been roundly cursed out by bureau men as they whine by a dangerous crossing while the cop is engaged in other business on the sidewalk nearby.

Contrary to what many people think, policemen customarily make no effort to get information from a prisoner they are bringing in and Mustache sat silent, unquestioned, during his ride from Lincoln Park to the Shakespeare Station. There was a bit of small talk among the detectives about the weather and about somebody's old lady who was sick; there was the monotonous "disregard" at varying levels on all three transmitters used by the Radio Room at 11th and State: "*Disregard* boy wanted for shooting a policeman in the 32nd District; boy now in custody of officers of the 32nd District; *disregard* to all squads . . ."

There was no indication from Mustache in the back seat as to what he thought of all this. And nobody asked him.

Captain Mullen of Shakespeare was out front pacing the sidewalk when Osterkorn's car drove up. He spoke only one word as Osterkorn reached in and took Mustache by the arm: "Lockup."

Osterkorn hustled the boy out of the car, into the station and across the worn flooring of the station to the lockup. Captain Mullen followed and went into conference with the two supervising captains in his office. Things must be done when you have a killer in custody and there are obvious priorities.

First of all, you call the State's Attorney's office. Should they keep the boy at "32" or did the State's Attorney want him at the Criminal Courts building, 26th and California?

"Keep him at '32.'"

Should they interrogate the boy or would an assistant State's Attorney be sent out to take a statement? "We'll send a man and a court reporter to take the statement. Talk to him if you want to."

Anything else? Well, they had better get the kid over to Alexian Brothers' Hospital and let the cop have a look at him. "And you had better make a date with John Reid to put him on the lie box."

They called the Hospital to inquire about the condition of Officer Albert Brown, the lockup keeper. Would it be all right to bring the boy over?

The doctor who took the call was not enthusiastic about the idea. Brown was in that post-operative period of danger when no one knew if he would live or die; he needed every breath and every moment of rest he could get.

"He's fifty-seven, you know," the doctor said, "and he's ripped up pretty badly in the belly."

Brown had been hit twice on that fateful night in the lockup at "32." One slug smashed the bones of his right hand when he reached to grab the gun from the boy; the other had gone into the soft flesh and had torn up his liver and intestines. The night he was rushed there, hemorrhaging badly, a hospital emergency team had spent six hours in the operating room—six hours of customary sterile care to find the bleeders and tie the sutures and patch him together again.

The officer had then been in surgical shock, of course. They pulled him out with a succession of Baxter bottles of whole blood, dripping it into his veins one drop at a time, and they were shooting him with antibiotics every four hours. Even so, they were not too hopeful they could save him.

The doctor at the hospital was aware of the legal necessity of having Officer Brown identify the boy who shot him. Iden-

tification would be especially important as testimony if the cop died. Reluctantly, the hospital doctor told the captains they could bring the boy over.

Osterkorn and his men took Mustache to Alexian Brothers' Hospital in a squad car. Two doctors and two nurses were waiting outside Brown's room when they arrived. The boy looked bored.

"You'll have to make it quick," one doctor said. "He's in an oxygen tent and he's pretty low."

Osterkorn nodded. Was Brown conscious? Yes, he was conscious. Quietly, Osterkorn and another cop and the boy entered the room.

"Hello, Al," Osterkorn said, speaking softly. "How are you?"

Officer Brown, inert in his tent, raised his eyelids almost imperceptibly in acknowledgment.

"We've got the kid," Osterkorn said, "and we need you to finger him."

Brown slowly moved his head to look at the boy, a disinterested sort of look. Osterkorn said that it was not a look of hatred or vengeance, "sort of a sad look, as if he felt sorry for the boy."

There was no telling, really, the thought in Brown's mind, though there was a good bit that he might have been thinking. Less than forty-eight hours earlier he had been this kid's keeper and that in itself was ironic. Brown was not the assigned lockup keeper at Shakespeare; he was filling in for someone else that night. And the boy did not belong at Shakespeare; he had been picked up by West North Avenue Station and locked up at Shakespeare only because they do not have a lockup at West North Avenue.

Policemen say you never can tell when you may get it. Brown was a veteran of thirty-three years on the force and he had grown accustomed to the idea, as most do, that nothing serious would ever happen to him personally. Yet here

he was in a hospital bed less than forty-eight hours from that desperate moment when he pulled a gun away from this boy and staggered, bleeding and frightened, out of the lockup.

The stark essentials of the shooting had all been reported in detail. As the boy raced out a back door of the lockup into the dark shelter of the night, Brown had stumbled his way down the long corridor from the lockup at the rear of the station to the desk sergeant up front. Brown had wheezed disbelievingly to the desk sergeant: "He shot me," and had collapsed, mortally hurt, without another word.

Lying now in his hospital bed, near death, Patrolman Brown looked peaceably at the boy who put him there. And the boy looked at the policeman. The cop looked at the boy with compassion. The boy looked at the cop in fear.

Osterkorn said, "Do you know that man?"

The boy nodded. "That's the policeman I shot."

And they took the boy back to Shakespeare.

PART 3

By the time they had Mustache back in isolation at Shakespeare, the station was alive with detectives from the bureau and with reporters and cameramen.

The detectives were satisfied and patient; the situation was in control of "the bosses" by now and, so far as ordinary policemen were concerned, the affair was over.

But the newspaper people were petulant. The afternoon papers were approaching final edition lock-up time, the same as the "bulldogs"—the first editions—of the next morning's papers. It is a curiosity of the news business in Chicago that the final editions of the afternoon *Daily News* and *American* hit the stands at the height of the evening rush hour along with the first editions of next day's *Tribune* and *Sun-Times*. All four papers are in a continuous fight for circulation for

this determines the magic figure upon which the advertising rate must be based, and there is intense competition for significant late-breaking stories for the obvious reason that the latest-appearing headlines sell the most papers. The situation at Shakespeare on the afternoon that Mustache made news was quite as usual: city editors and picture editors of all four Chicago papers were impatient at the delay in getting late material on the boy and were pounding their people at Shakespeare to come up quickly with the salient facts and the "art" on the day's big newsbreak.

Mustache was being held incommunicado—principally because juvenile authorities in Cook County are zealous to protect not only the identities of young offenders but the details of their crimes. The police were not eager to depart from this custom in Mustache's case and risk the wrath of higher agencies, especially with the boy locked up again and the situation comfortably in hand.

Pending the arrival of the man from the State Attorney's office, the three captains at Shakespeare had jurisdiction. Quite unexpectedly, they permitted this reporter to talk with the boy. The captains were curious about what the boy would say and they were pleased, naturally enough, that the arrest had been made quickly, without a gun battle. They were in a good mood to permit an exception to the practice of shielding their juvenile prisoners from inquiry by the press and, overriding their misgivings, they agreed to let us have a look at Mustache.

The captains placed limitations on how Mustache was to be treated. They said they would not order the boy to answer questions and would not subject him to a general press conference. He would be brought out and told that a single radio reporter wished to ask him some questions, and that he was free to answer the questions or not, as he chose.

The photographers would, of course, take pictures but no posed shots. The pencil reporters from newspapers and wire

services, for this was a national story, would take their notes from whatever Mustache replied to the radio reporter's interview. The pencil reporters agreed, and kept the agreement.

There must have been a dozen or more newspaper people on hand, and the number of policemen had multiplied for the men assigned to the four-to-midnight watch were arriving; they too wanted a look at Mustache because they had been in on the search. Captain Ryan said this inquiry would require some space and it was decided that I would talk to the boy in the Shakespeare squad room. This is the room where each new shift of station complement is assembled and given orders for the watch and where the retiring shift is gathered for dismissal.

When Mustache was brought into the squad room, he seemed flattered at the size of the gathering. He puffed up and raised his head to strike a nice pose as the still-picture men went into action. Then he slowly inspected those in the squad room as Captain Ryan explained why he had been brought out of the lockup. Mustache said, sure, he would answer some questions.

The boy was offered a cigarette, took it, and listened carefully when told by the radio reporter, who was a stranger to him, that both the reporter's questions and his own answers would be recorded.

He said all right, that was all right. What would the questions be about? About a lot of things, everything. All right, Mustache said, that would be O.K. with him.

And this is the transcript of the interrogation of the boy who shot the cop:

"I want your full name."

"Dean."

"Ronald Charles Dean?"

Mustache smiled faintly, as if amused at hearing his full name. He nodded. "Yeah, Ronald Charles Dean."

"And where do you live?"

"Live? I don't know. No place, any place."

"But not at home?"

"No."

"You're in a peck of trouble."

"I always been in trouble. Since I was born, it seems like; always in trouble. About four or five years ago I got caught on a burglary. A house."

"What did you get?"

"A watch, radio, money. Not much."

"What did you do with it?"

"Nuthin'. I got caught wit' it."

"You take a fall for that?"

"No. No, it was my first offense. First time I was caught. They told me: Stay out of trouble or I would end up bad, and crap like that."

"And it didn't mean anything to you?"

"No; it is just talk they give everybody on a first offense. It is the same crap they give everybody. 'Stay out of trouble.' You know what they say."

Because the kids observe how the law works, it is commonly understood by beginner criminals that they will never be sent to a reformatory or punished for a moderate offense the first time they are caught. Beginner criminals cling to a belief that it is a precept of law that the first offense is "on the house" and they are indignant, as Mustache would have been, to be sent away the first time they are caught and tried. This is a great weakness in dealing with juvenile crime. Kids regard a judge as a freak who will order a boy to serve time on his first offense and they will sympathize with the boy, regarding him as the victim of an unreasonable judge who is callously violating the rules. There will be ample opportunity, they feel, to sentence the boy for crimes on which he will be picked up later—for this kind of boy can be counted on not to stay out of trouble. I now asked Mustache about this.

"Ronald, you weren't very good at staying out of trouble, were you?"

"No, not very good at that. I got arrested for curfew and fightin' . . . a few different things."

"Were you going to school?"

"Oh sure, lots of schools. But they didn't mean nuthin' to me."

"Did you get into high school?"

"Sure. I went to Tuley, a regular high school, same as everybody else. But I only lasted till second year."

"Did you quit, did they throw you out, or what?"

"I got kicked out of Tuley and they made me go to Montefiore. You know what that is, don't you?"

Yes, I did, and it fit this boy. Montefiore, with a student population of about four hundred and twenty-five, is one of the two schools maintained by the Chicago Board of Education for "socially maladjusted" boys, i.e., quasi-incorrigibles who are declared *persona non grata* by the principals of conventional schools. Montefiore is a day school operated twelve months a year and classes range, because of the wide variety of problem children who wind up there, from third grade to the fourth year of high school. Truancy is a serious problem at Montefiore; the administration and staff try to keep the maladjusted kids contented with free lunches, elaborate trade shops and other special treatment. They also have a big stick over the youngster at Montefiore: if he fails there, he can be sent to another place that is worse, the Parental School. There he will be kept under discipline twenty-four hours a day, living with "cottage parents" in a cottage where he is in no respect a free agent. The boy in Montefiore feels about Parental School as a man in County Jail feels about State Prison. Mustache was tragically qualified for Parental School but he had made a detour.

"I took a fall at St. Charles while I was still going to Montefiore. I knew a lot of guys that got Parental, but I

went right from Montefiore to St. Charles. And you know what that is, don't you?"

Yes, indeed I did. St. Charles is the dangerously overcrowded Illinois State Training School for boys, a breeding place, some critics say, for the criminals of tomorrow, a primary school of crime where bad boys frequently grow worse instead of better. Boys are sent to Montefiore and Parental School at the recommendation of the courts. However, under relatively new State law, the Illinois Youth Commission has authority over all delinquents against whom there has been a finding of guilty in a juvenile court. The Youth Commission, and not the court, sets the penalty for the crime and may, at its discretion, turn a boy loose, give him probation, assign him to St. Charles, or transfer a troublemaker from St. Charles to the State institution at Sheridan. The Youth Commission can require a boy to serve his maximum sentence or grant him freedom on parole. Many boys found guilty by the juvenile courts are given their freedom by the Youth Commission, a major reason for this being that the State lacks facilities for housing them at St. Charles or Sheridan, and the Youth Commission has literally no choice but to turn them loose. St. Charles was designed to house four hundred boys and never more than six hundred; within the past year, its population has approached eight hundred. The Youth Commission tried to alleviate the problem by placing one hundred and twenty-five boys in forestry camps where they do maintenance work in the State parks, yet the overcrowding at St. Charles remains critical. The crisis at Sheridan is worse. Sheridan was built to take care of two hundred and seventy-five boys, but the population is now close to four hundred, and the pressure of maintaining order is more intense at Sheridan because the more serious offenders are locked up there.

The public is only vaguely aware of the existence of St. Charles and Sheridan and has virtually no knowledge of how

these places function or why. Boys constantly in trouble, boys like Ronald Charles Dean, know all there is to know about life in both institutions. Mustache had personal knowledge of life in St. Charles.

"When did they send you to St. Charles? Was it the first time?"

"Yeah, last year. I kept runnin' away from home an' then they got me for burglary. I put in eight months out there at St. Charles."

"Can you learn things there?"

"Well, you can learn anything you want. There are some guys who come out of there and they've had it and they've maybe learned a trade and you can get straightened out if that's how you feel about it. But they got homos there and wild guys, and it's crowded and them people who run it don't have much chance. I mean it's impossible to keep the lid on all that, what with everybody bunched up together and all that."

"Do they beat you up at St. Charles?"

"No, not no more. I guess that's how it used to be. They would give you the hose and knock you around with the water and put you in a hole with no clothes on; that's what the guys all said. But it sure is different now."

There was a time when the lash was standard equipment at all reformatories and harsh treatment was the rule at St. Charles as well, until relatively recent times. Discipline is more enlightened now in most reformatories of the nation, although brutality still prevails *sub rosa* in many institutions where boys are locked up, and instances of cruelty can still be found in almost all these places. The boys naturally prefer decent treament, but, in the equation of peace and defiance, they are not convinced that the policy of non-brutal discipline is a completely good thing. Subconsciously, most want to expiate their guilt. With reference to the change of policy, I asked Mustache:

"You think this is a better way to run a place like St. Charles . . . no beatings?"

"Well, I don't know. Some of the kids will push everybody around if they figure nobody's gonna do anything about it. They make it tough on the other kids. It gets so the guys are more afraid of other guys who are out there than they are of the people who run the joint. But the new way of not beatin' you gives you a chance to straighten out."

". . . What do the boys talk about at St. Charles?"

"Everything. They talk about their friends that they got on the heist on the outside and things that they did and how they got caught. And if a guy has his old man in the can at Stateville, or somewheres, he will brag about it generally."

Juvenile criminals frequently refer to Stateville, a maximum security prison of national renown in penal circles and located in lovely farmland north of Joliet. The juveniles often know older men from their neighborhoods who are among the three thousand convicts locked up there—and juveniles in trouble are inclined to ponder the possibility that one day they too will be locked up out there.

"Why would a boy brag about his father being locked up at Stateville?"

"I don't know. They do. It's just talk, I think. The kids talk about everything, like I say."

"Do they talk about how to smash the bullet-proof window of a Currency Exchange? How to set a trap for a strong arm? How to steal a car?"

"Well, it's like this: You can pick out the ones who know. You talk to a car thief, you learn how to steal a car. You talk to a burglar, you find out how to be a burglar."

"And everybody talks to everybody?"

"Sure, about everything. You talk to some guys and they act big and so they are telling about the big jobs they are gonna pull or the big job that they did pull. They talk about guys they know that shot it out and older guys in the neigh-

borhood that pulled off a big one and they talk about the girls they have had and how often, and the cars that they've got . . . It doesn't amount to nuttin'. It is just talk."

"Doesn't anybody out there figure you can't get away with it? That this is a bad proposition?"

"Sure, like I told you, it straightens out a lot of guys out there."

"But a lot of guys are just as bad when they get out?"

"Them? They are worse when they get out. They have learned things."

"How were you when you got out? You put in eight months out there and got all this education; what happened to you?"

"Well, I get out and I get busted two months later for assault."

"You assaulted a woman?"

"No, I never done that. Jeez, a guy don't have to do that. It was a fight. I was with some guys and we got in a fight with another guy and he got his head fractured or somethin' like that and almost died and they grabbed me, on account I had a record."

"You mean a bunch of you guys ganged up on one guy, is that it?"

"Well, there was three of us and one of *them.*"

"Were you worried about this boy and his fractured head? You can die from that."

"Yeah, I was worried. But it turned out all right for the guy. Only they grabbed me and put me in Juvenile Home and they had me there five weeks and then I went to court and I wind up back at St. Charles again. I told the fellas when I got there that I was going over the wall and that's what I did."

"Is it easy to go over the wall?"

"Sure. There really ain't any walls to speak of and nobody up in a tower firing a rifle at you if they see you, like it is in the bigger places."

"How long ago was it that you went over the wall?"

"About three weeks ago."

"And how did you get into Chicago? That's forty miles out. Did you steal a car or what?"

". . . I don't want to say. Only I did come to Chicago."

"And where did you hole up for the past three weeks?"

"Well, I went to my mudder and she starts hollering about a life of crime and crap like that and I went out and got an apartment up on the North Side."

"You were sixteen and you got an apartment?"

"Sure, why not? Guy has to have some privacy. You ask a girl . . . You can't take no girl to your mudder's. Or the guys."

"How did you pay the rent?"

"Well, my mudder gave me some money and I got some money from burglaries. It is the only way I know."

His comment about getting an apartment was true; the boy's mother, a thirty-five-year-old divorcee, said it was true. When police established her address the morning after the shooting, two detectives were sent to talk to her. She was not home. Although aware that her son had shot a policeman and was a fugitive—the story was splashed across the front pages of all Chicago papers—the mother had gone to work as usual. They found her punching cards in the accounting department of a loop bank. She said that she did not know where her boy was, that he lived alone. The mother had little more to say about the boy: "I asked him why he ran away from the reformatory at St. Charles and I told him he had better go back. But that was two weeks ago, and that was the last I saw him." The mother breathed regrets that things had turned out as they had and was humiliated that policemen had come to the bank to talk with her, but she took refuge in apparent concern with popping holes in the right places in the cards of the accounting department. The detectives asked her if she knew whether the boy had a job

and she said no, she didn't know. The detectives were reasonably certain that her boy had been living as a thief; thus no one was surprised when he casually admitted that this had been the case.

"How many burglaries did it take to keep you going for three weeks, Ronald?"

"Oh, I don't know. Put it down at three or four. It doesn't matter now."

"Anyhow, they grabbed you on July 4?"

"Yeah. About five o'clock in the morning."

"How come you got caught?"

"I don't know: somebody seen me. I was going through a car and a squad came out of nowhere and they got me cold."

"What did you get out of the car?"

"Nuthin'. A wallet, but there was nuthin' in the wallet. But I had it in my pocket and I was gonna keep it and that's all they needed for the evidence."

"You got busted for stealing an empty wallet?"

"It works like that sometimes. Sometimes you get something and you get away clean. Sometimes they catch you; that makes up for the times you get away with it."

"So they brought you over here to '32,' to the Shakespeare Station. Is that right?"

"That's right. It was West North Avenue that got me but they brung me here."

"And you were the only one in the lockup, is that right?"

"No, that ain't right. I was here two nights. The first night they had about five of us; different guys I didn't know, you know. Older fellas. And they moved them out of here the next day."

"Well, the second evening you were alone in the lockup. No other prisoners."

"That's right. I was the only one in a cell."

"And how did you get out of the cell?"

"The cell door was open. It had a busted lock and I opened it and I got into a runway between the cells and the open part of the cell block and I broke a screen on the second floor and I opened *it* up and there I was with only one more door between me and the outside."

"What about the gun?"

"The gun was in a drawer of a desk belonging to the turnkey. It was in a drawer."

"How did you know that?"

"I didn't know it. I was lookin' through the drawers of the desk for the key to that other door, the door leadin' outside, and I found this gun."

It is a violation of Police Department regulations for the lockup keeper to carry his service pistol into the lockup. Presumably, Officer Albert Brown—who was not regularly a lockup keeper—was not familiar with the regulation and placed his gun in the drawer without giving the matter much thought. Or possibly, although he knew the regulation, he ignored it; after all, who ever heard of a lockup keeper getting shot with his own gun? Mustache said he was sure surprised to find that gun.

"And what did you decide when you found the gun?"

"I figured I'd make the turnkey let me out."

"He was not in the lockup?"

"No, he was not in there then."

"How long was it before he came back?"

"About a half hour."

"And you were waiting for him with the gun in your hand?"

"With the gun in my hand."

"That's a long time to think about this thing."

"Yes."

"And you were ready to shoot your way out of that cell block if you had to?"

"I didn't think I was; no. Not while I was waitin'. I just figured when he came back and seen me with the gun, he would toss me the keys and back away."

"But when he came back, he didn't back away. He didn't toss you the keys."

"No. He had the door open before he seen me and he looked surprised, and I told him to leave the door open and then he come for me."

"How far did he have to go to come for you?"

"About six feet. He come in at me slow."

"What did you say?"

"I told him: 'Don't come no closer.' "

"What did he say?"

"He told me I didn't want to shoot him."

"How did he say it?"

"He said, 'You don't want to shoot me, son.' "

"And what did you say?"

"Nuthin'. I just told him: 'Don't come no closer.' "

"And he came at you for the gun?"

"That's right."

"How far was he from you when you fired?"

"Oh, about two feet. After that it was quick. He grabbed aholt of the gun and I shot him and then he grabbed aholt of me and I shot him again."

"Did he fall?"

"No. He had hold of the gun by then and I figured he would kill me, but he just stood there looking at me. He just stood there wobbly-like, and like he didn't believe it, and I ran out of the door into the alley."

"Where did you go?"

"I run like a rabbit. I figured they would kill me as quick as they could find me. I got about three blocks away when I heard the first sirens and I dived under a porch. I stayed there most of the night. They had squad cars every place.

Moving real slow and swinging them spots every place. They were walkin' close to me and they put flashlights right under the porch, but they missed me."

"And when did you get out of there?"

"Before it got light. I got to a telephone and I called a buddy of mine and told him I was hot, and my buddy said he knew it because he seen it in the morning papers already."

"Why did you take a chance on calling your buddy? Didn't you think he'd turn you in?"

"I should of figured it, but I had to have help. I wanted a gun. I had eleven .38's in my pocket that I took out of the turnkey's desk, but I had to have the gun."

"Your buddy put the finger on you."

"I should of figured it. When you are real hot, you ain't got any friends. You are just trouble for everybody."

"Seems you've been trouble for everybody all your life."

"You could say that."

"And now you've shot a cop."

"All right, so I shot a cop."

"How do you think these policemen—these men right here in the squad room—how do you think they feel about you?"

"How do I know?"

"Did these policemen put their hands on you?"

"No."

"Slap you around or hit you over the can with a chunk of hose?"

"No."

"Did they holler at you or threaten you?"

"No. All they said was: 'Was I hungry? Would I like a bologna sandwich?' "

"And you are feeling a little too sick to eat."

"I don't know. I'm scared, I guess. I am only sixteen."

"I know a lot of sixteen-year-old kids who are on the legit."

"They're 'way ahead of me . . . They've got it made."

"Well, you're only sixteen. You've got a future."

"I'm different: I shot a policeman, like you say. I ain't got a future."

"And you wouldn't even dream of going legit?"

"Legit? How the hell do you go legit when they got you for shootin' a cop? It's a little late for that now, ain't it?"

PART 4

The Law moved quickly with Ronald Charles Dean, the boy who shot the cop.

For a lesser offense, he would have been ticketed for Boys' Court and have entered the custody of the Illinois Youth Commission. But murder is beyond the jurisdiction of the Youth Commission and the State's Attorney, bypassing Boys' Court, took the case to the Cook County Grand Jury directly.

A great deal had happened in a brief period of time: on a Tuesday, July 5, in the late evening, Mustache had shot the policeman; on Thursday, July 7, about one P.M., he was picked up in Lincoln Park; on Friday, July 8, the Grand Jury returned a true bill on the allegation of the State's Attorney that the boy had committed assault with intent to kill.

They held Mustache in County Jail in lieu of ten thousand dollars cash bond.

The boy was then arraigned in Felony Court on that same day, July 8, before Judge Jacob M. Braude. Did he have anything to say?

"I ain't got nuttin' to say."

On the night of July 19, Officer Albert Brown died in his bed at Alexian Brothers' Hospital.

The boy, still in County Jail, was promptly indicted for murder.

Flanked by policemen, he sat glumly through a coroner's

inquest. Harry Glos, at that time Chief Deputy Coroner, established the corpus delicti: it is required by law that the Coroner establish that someone is dead before evidence may be presented on the cause of his death. A grieving relative now testified that he had seen the body of Officer Brown and that Brown was indeed dead. Glos then swore in the investigating officer who droned out the details of the case.

In due course, Ronald Charles Dean was called to the stand. He tried to cover his face as photographers, many of them standing on chairs and leaning over the coroner's desk, slapped plate holders in and out of Speed Graphic cameras, angled for a good shot of the boy. Glos moved his chair toward Mustache in hopes of getting his picture in the newspapers too and he turned his face toward the photographers' Strobe flashguns that put out blips of light as the cameramen took their pictures.

The Chief Deputy Coroner gave the newsmen ample time to get all the pictures they wanted, as is the custom at a coroner's inquest, and then he apprised the boy of his constitutional rights. Mustache was told that he did not have to testify if he did not care to. Yet, hopefully, the Chief Deputy now asked Mustache if he would tell the jury of the events leading up to the shooting of Officer Brown.

Mustache wriggled in his chair. After a moment, he said, "I don't want to talk about it."

The Coroner's Jury returned a verdict of homicide and recommended that Dean be held to the Grand Jury. The verdict was of no consequence: the boy had already been indicted.

Dean was arraigned on the murder indictment before Chief Justice Cornelius J. Harrington of the Criminal Court who decreed, given his sixteen years, he must be examined at the Cook County behavior clinic to determine his legal responsibility.

The psychiatrists reported a few days later that Ronald

Charles Dean was "extremely nervous, probably from environmental stimuli," but quite sane and responsible.

Justice Harrington then set October 24 as the date of trial and assigned the case to Judge James B. Bryant.

In the dilly and dally of the law, it was not until December 12 that the case of the State of Illinois vs. Ronald Charles Dean came to trial.

There was a quick trial. His counsel entered a plea of guilty and the State entered a recommendation of life imprisonment.

There were only two witnesses of any consequence, the boy and his mother.

In public confession, the mother admitted that the boy had never had a chance. She said, "He never received proper attention or care."

Dean's mother declared the boy's father was an alcoholic.

"There has always been violence and trouble in our home," the mother said.

And no control over the boy.

Had there been no chance for him to anchor himself in school, protect himself from drifting into ultimate smashup?

"Schools . . ." the mother said, spreading her hands. "My boy has been in and out of fourteen elementary schools."

Fourteen?

"Fourteen."

Mustache himself had little to add to the case when they put him on the stand. In a monotone, he told the essentials.

How had he been able to break out of the cell in Shakespeare and get to the desk that held the gun?

The bottom plate of the cell door was rusted out and he had opened it inadvertently by shaking the door just "to raise hell," the way many locked-up people do. Screaming prisoners are an acute annoyance in a lockup and it is likely, although this will never be known, that Officer Brown got

out of the cell block to escape listening to the racket and obscenities, never dreaming that the boy in the cell was about to kill him.

And here it was, the end of the trial.

The boy stood before the judge, who briefly summed up the case with mention of the plea of guilty and the recommendation of the State.

"Ronald Charles Dean, I sentence you to life imprisonment."

The boy looked foggy. He swayed. A bailiff caught him by the arm and led him away.

On January 27, he was shipped from Cook County Jail to an ancient penitentiary known as Old Joliet. When they put him in the van with many older men, the official documents that went with him included a "statement of facts," a summation of his case, prepared jointly by the prosecutor and the trial judge.

At the Illinois prison reception depot in Old Joliet, they shaved his head and all the hair on his body.

They gave him inoculations against communicable diseases.

They gave him physical and mental tests.

They fingerprinted him and took his picture, front view and profile, with his prison number spread across the plates.

They lectured him on what was expected of him and what the consequences of nonconformity would be.

They told him what his privileges would be.

Then they locked him into quarantine for thirty days because they could not know what manner of bug might be living inside him, and there are plenty of problems within a prison without needlessly endangering the health of those already there.

Finally, after thirty days, they put him in the van again and sent him to a prison for young criminals called Pontiac.

He will spend about half his prison term there.

He will graduate from Pontiac as he grows older and his half cell is needed for another younger man.

He will probably graduate to Stateville, although—if luck or his behavior is bad—he could be sent to the prison at Menard.

Mustache will be a real con by this time. He will know at first hand that available prisons can vary in comfort like hotels and he will be hopeful that they give him Stateville. He will cheer if they give him Stateville.

Much of the attention at Menard is centered on the criminally insane and a con who is "solid" hates to do time at Menard because word gets out that the stir has got you and the con feels this is a hard thing to shake off. He knows that whether they turn you free from a place like Menard or send you on to another institution, you will be branded a mental case. This in itself is enough to drive a man crazy because it isolates him; he is now the symbol of a terrible thing and no one else will be his pal or talk to him.

If Mustache gets Stateville, he will know by the time he is ripe for shipment that Stateville is not a soft touch. It is run with impersonal efficiency by the celebrated warden, Joseph E. Ragen. Ragen counts among his virtues an awareness that fairness and discipline are the only effective weapons in controlling three thousand men who would happily kill you to get out.

Mustache will know, if he gets Stateville, that Warden Ragen will supply him with copies of the Chicago newspapers, will let him listen on a headset in his own bunk to all that is broadcast over three major networks, and will see to it that he is well fed. He will also get the word that Warden Ragen's people will cut him down with 30-30 rifles if they spot him trying to get away.

Mustache will be in fashionable company if he gets Stateville. There is a long list of nationally known criminals in the membership out there.

Roger Touhy, the old beer runner, is working on his twenty-fourth year for the so-called kidnaping of a character named Jake (The Barber) Factor. (Federal Judge John P. Barnes held, in a prolonged habeas corpus hearing, that the kidnaping was a hoax but the State of Illinois continued Touhy's sentence on a technicality.)

Basil (The Owl) Banghart is at Stateville, too. There are some who say that he is the greatest genius crime has produced in our time with the unique distinction, The Owl, of never having taken a fall for a minor crime.

Nathan Leopold, the co-killer of Bobby Franks, brought attention to Stateville for thirty-three years principally by his flagging and finally successful campaign to win parole.

In view of his present age, it seems ridiculous that the First Boy will end up with people like these. But he will. Mustache will share the common life of everybody at Stateville, for all the inmates are treated the same and live the same, somewhat in the manner of the priory life of the mendicant monks.

He will be better off than some of the inmates at Stateville —he will get out one day, despite his sentence of life, and some of the others will never get out. Mustache will be eligible for parole on December 13, 1975. He will be thirty-six. He will have contributed twenty calendar years, from the date of conviction, for pumping a fatal .38 into the belly of a cop.

2

The second boy : "Mr. Slick"

"If you ask me," the Second Boy said, "they are afraid of the kids. The coppers and their folks and everybody. Afraid of 'em. And the reason is, everybody's plenty dirty themselves and everybody's got a racket and they start preachin' at you and all you gotta say is, 'You bastard, who are you, you should be tellin' *me?*' They can't do nothin' to you."

"They put you in jail."

"Not any more. It's only suckers who go to jail. You learn to nibble on the cheese a little bit and not grab it all an' you're O.K. That's the way to do it, get away with what you know you can make."

A juvenile officer who had kept in touch with this boy privately for half a dozen years referred to him as "Mr. Slick." He knew the boy, cunning, polite, a wise-guy.

Mr. Slick, a nineteen-year-old Chicagoan, was a typical-looking boy styled in the same way, in dress and body, as the "standard" flashy delinquent, for they have a mode of their own. Another thin, zooty kind of boy with the custom-

ary duck-tail coiffure, hair quite full and oily over the ears, and a face that was taut beyond his years. A highly nervous, intense boy, with eyes that characterized the kind he was: hard, quick, skeptical.

Mr. Slick had spent his high school years as an inmate of the Illinois Industrial School for Boys, located at Sheridan. Mustache knew St. Charles; *he* knew "Sheridan," a reformatory in which the worst of the juvenile crop is confined: thieves, rapists, and a handful of killers.

Those who have served their sentences are sent back to society and new boys are moved in every day, to do their time for the crimes of which they have been convicted. On any given day, at least three hundred and fifty boys are leading a convict's life at Sheridan.

Penologists refer to Sheridan as a "medium security" institution, meaning that the inmates have more liberty than adult criminals in "maximum security" prisons. Yet those in charge of Sheridan never permit themselves to forget that the boys in their care are guilty of grave crimes and escaped being sent to prison simply because they were chronologically boys, not men.

The rules of behavior at Sheridan are firm and an inmate who breaks the rules is punished. He would find it exceedingly difficult to escape, although escape is the burning desire of most boys confined there, just as it is of most of the men and boys at Pontiac, Menard, Old Joliet, Stateville or any other well-known prison: the constant and unsatisfied hunger is for freedom, freedom from the unbending and unvarying authority of the institution. Lacking the opportunity to break out and utterly depressed by the discipline of prison life, a boy or man not uncommonly explodes (or "acts out," as the psychologists would say) in all manner of trouble-making. At Sheridan, as in any well-run institution, those in charge deal quickly and firmly with trouble-makers. Confine-

ment is made almost unbearable for those who do not follow what the penal people call The Rule.

Quite clearly, three and a half years at a place like Sheridan can have a tremendous effect on a boy. Three and a half years at Sheridan sharpened the boldness and cynicism of Mr. Slick, developed his cunning and exposed him to an intimate knowledge of crime. A bright boy, he had tried to follow The Rule or, to be more exact, he had tried to avoid getting caught violating The Rule.

Mr. Slick was free when we talked with him and was quick to respond when he found that someone was interested in what he might have to say about juvenile delinquency. In contrast to some of the other boys, Mr. Slick was garrulous. He spoke with an over-confidence that was irritating; whatever else he might have lacked, he had an abundance of self-esteem. A good deal of what he had to say was hokum, but his basic comments, "If you ask me, they're afraid of the kids," came close to fundamental truth.

Mr. Slick was bright and neat, and he had a young girl with him. She appeared about sixteen. She too was neatly dressed and personable. In spite of too much lipstick, she was a pretty girl with an oval, almost classic face. Obviously, because he talked freely in her presence, she knew Mr. Slick's background. She made no comment and was obedient when the boy said:

"You wait outside, babe, until we are done."

The girl nodded and quietly left the room.

"I'm thinkin' of marryin' that little broad," Mr. Slick said.

"Is she a nice girl?"

Mr. Slick smiled. "You can always get rid of 'em when you don't want 'em. Everybody does."

"Not everybody."

"Well, it seems like just about everybody."

"Do you think everybody is rotten?"

"Everybody is *kind* of rotten. Look at everybody: crooked coppers and judges and all. Lawyers, business guys . . . That fast buck has got an awful lot of appeal."

"Not for everybody."

"You'd be surprised," the boy said. "Suppose you stickup some guy, well-dressed and all that. Maybe he got forty, fifty dollars and a cheap watch and a ring maybe and you take everything. You look at the watch and the ring and you throw them away; junk. Or you get a very few bucks for 'em. All right, you read in the papers this guy was held up and he lost a hundred and seventy-five in cash, and a watch and a ring worth eight hundred; that's what he tells them, and you know he's a goddam liar."

"Were you ever put in a lineup with a victim like this looking at you?"

Mr. Slick smiled and shook his head. "I'm not saying I done that. It happens, though; I know that. And in the lineup, the sucker is afraid to put the finger on you because he was a liar for his pride or for the insurance or something, and he can't put the finger on you because he was a liar and you know he was a liar and *he's* afraid you will say he was a liar and that you didn't get no eight hundred for the stuff but maybe only forty or fifty."

An ability shrewdly to calculate their chances is characteristic of juveniles who have been involved in serious crime. They find some justification for whatever they have done in the things they know older people have done. And the low opinion they have come to hold of their elders is the reason why the admonitions of adults have no effect on them.

As young Mr. Slick insisted, it is true that older people are quickly frightened by teen-age criminals; they back away from what the boys have already done and live in dread of what they may do next. You can't direct a mule, much less a boy, once he knows you are afraid of him. A tough boy will pressure you and blackmail you with your own fear, and the

longer you try to cajole or bribe him into better deportment the longer will he remain in rebellion. All this quickly comes to the surface in conversations with kids in trouble, and their insolence toward authority, so long as they know they can get away with it, is not surprising: it is clearly symptomatic of their mixed-up lives.

Just as symptomatic is the fact that most juvenile criminals are searching in the shadows of their underworld for a doorway that leads to decent living. They understand that there is a better way of life, a happier and more tranquil existence, and it is only the hope of one day finding that decent existence that restrains the delinquent from plunging into an altogether destructive behavior pattern.

Even the cynical Mr. Slick conceded that not everyone was "rotten." He resented authority and would circumvent it in every way he could; he would ridicule his elders and imply that there was an inalienable strain of larceny in all human beings, but his convictions about human behavior went deeper than that. Defiant as he was, he knew that goodness, kindness, virtue can be found and what he hoped for, I think, was that someone would find a trace of goodness, kindness, and virtue in him.

"I've had it," he said several times, meaning that he had had enough of being locked up and would be careful to see that it didn't happen to him again.

With the persistence of a high-pressure salesman, he was anxious for us to understand that he meant what he said, that he was firmly resolved to stay out of trouble. He pressed the point repeatedly in the early part of our talk: his protestations were so over-emphatic that they left us unconvinced. After all, Mr. Slick had been overtly in trouble for more than a third of his nineteen years.

"The first time they had me was, oh, five, six years ago," Mr. Slick said. "I was thirteen. Fourteen maybe. There was a gang of us, hanging around a corner and we started stealin'

cars. The older guys all had cars and they were havin' a lot of fun and we couldn't buy a car, so we stole 'em."

"How do you break into a car?"

"We'd just look for a car that was open."

"And you'd use a jumper to beat the ignition?"

Mr. Slick looked at me thoughtfully, surprised that I knew the technique of starting a car that had a locked ignition.

"Sometimes we'd use a jumper," he conceded. "Not all the time. People are careless and leave the keys in their car. It was like getting an invitation, finding the key right in the ignition."

"And where would you go in the cars?"

"Well, we would pick up some girls usually and go for a ride."

"Where?"

"Oh, just for a ride. Out around the country and all over the city. Anywhere. Then we'd get rid of the car, just leave it. If we wanted another car, we could always get another car."

"Did you syphon gas?"

"Yeah, once in awhile. If we had a car and we needed gas, we would syphon or tap a cab."

"Tap a cab?"

"Taxicabs. They were parked in a garage over around my house and we'd go back in a yard there, where the cabs were parked at."

"All of them loaded with gas?"

"Yeah. They usually fill 'em up when they bring 'em in. You can just take the plug out underneath and drain the gas into a can and put it in your car. It worked good till we got picked up, the whole bunch of us. There was thirty-nine of us; we all got picked up together."

"And why were you picked up? Cars?"

"For everything. Burglary, stealin' cars, fightin'. That's really what we were picked up for: fightin'. We were in a

big fight and after they had us, some people identified us; they had seen us, you know, in the homes."

"You were picked up while fighting a rival gang?"

"Right. There was about a dozen of us and we were having a rumble with this other gang one night and they moved in and grabbed all of us guys right while we were havin' this fight. If we didn't get lippy with the cops, maybe we would of beat it and they'd have kicked us in the tail and told us to go get lost. But we got lippy and they pulled us in."

"A dozen of you."

"Well, they got everybody after they took the twelve of us. They work this around and that around and they get somebody to talk a little bit and finally they had all of us, the whole bunch of our guys."

"And what did they do with you? Where did they take you?"

"We ended up at the Juvenile Home. First they took us to a police station and then to the Juvenile Home."

"For fighting?" It was difficult to believe. "You mean they hauled thirty-nine boys to Juvenile because of a fight?"

Mr. Slick hesitated. "Well," he said, "not exactly. They hit us with them burglaries. After the fight they had us in a room out there, and they brought in people that fingered us, people that identified us. For burglary."

"And then what happened?"

"Well, they bound us over to the Grand Jury and moved us to County Jail. They had everybody, the whole gang, but only a few of us was involved."

"What had you burglarized?"

"Homes. It's easy to get into 'em. You look for a home that's dark, lights out and like that. We'd figure there was nobody home. We'd look to see if any windows was open. If the windows were open, we'd go in."

"What would you take?"

"Anything. Clothes, money, things like that."

"You took clothes?"

"We'd take them for ourselves, wear them. But with most of the stuff, clocks, radios and things like that, we'd sell it."

"Pawn shops?"

"Yeah, mostly pawn shops. It's quick."

Although Illinois law quite clearly prohibits the purchase of any article from a minor, the pawn shops are not deterred. The pawn shop owner or manager is required to keep a record of every transaction and his records, in a city like Chicago, must be available for police inspection. The simple truth is that he falsifies these records; the minor who brings in an article is almost certain to give a false name and address which the pawn shop man records without question, and the minor is then listed in the pawn shop records as an adult. It is relatively easy for the police pawn shop detail to turn up a stolen article because the shop keeper is willing enough to keep the detailed information required on each item that comes into his possession, the make of a watch, say, the case number and other data. But it is practically impossible for the pawn shop detail detectives to find the boy who brought in the watch and sold it, or borrowed money against the watch as security, given the false record of the minor's name and address.

It is axiomatic that the pawn shop keeper who does business with minors is encouraging the youngsters to steal. Axiomatic, too, that the pawn shop man will cheat the minor in the transaction, handing over far less money than the article is worth.

With all this in mind, I said to Mr. Slick matter-of-factly: "You didn't get much for what you brought to the pawn shops."

Mr. Slick smiled. "No, the pawn shop guys knew it was stolen stuff or we wouldn't be selling it."

"Did they give you a bad time with questions? Did they argue with you?"

"Only about the price. They'd cut us down pretty hard on the price."

"You gave the pawn shop people phony names?"

"Oh, sure; just make one up when he went to write it in that book. Make up an address and that was it."

"You knew then that they keep a record of all transactions?"

"Sure, that book. And that's why nobody keeps the tickets. You take the pawn tickets and you toss them as quick as you can."

"And you knew all this by the time you were thirteen or fourteen?"

"Well, figure it out. That was five, six years ago and I'm nineteen now."

"When they tagged you for burglary, you and those other kids, what did they do with you?"

"Well, they had all thirty-nine of us locked up at County Jail and they threw it at five of us. They brought these here charges against five of us. And we went to court for burglary and they had lots of people to testify against us and sentenced all five of us to the Sheridan Reformatory."

"You didn't expect to get Sheridan?"

"No. Well, we was only kids and we figured maybe St. Charles or maybe probation. But they gave us three-to-five and . . . Well, those things happen."

"How did you get along at Sheridan?"

"Oh, I got along all right. Don't bother nobody in a place like that and you'll get along all right."

"How many kids did you know at Sheridan? How many did you know real well? A dozen?"

"Well, I was there three and a half years. I knew just about everybody that was out there. I mean I got along with everybody."

"Could you figure out the kids that you thought would be on the square in the future?"

"I could just about tell by lookin' at them."

"And the ones that were going to spend their lives with a gun, could you tell that?"

"Right."

"Didn't those who were going to spend their lives with a gun ever figure that they couldn't win?"

"They don't figure like that. They're always talking, 'I'll get away with it this time; I'll do this and I'll make a little improvement here, and I'll do that and I won't get caught next time.' They'd tell you, if you use your brains you don't get caught."

"You think it works that way?"

"Well, maybe with those fellas who took the million from Brinks in Boston; they really scored. But not those kids from Sheridan. There was about, well, about fifteen guys that me and my buddy knew real well and we talked a lot about these guys; what would happen to them when they went out and all that. Most of them went out with me and my buddy; they served the max., same as we did, and they let them go."

"You mean they served the maximum time they were required to serve of the sentence they had?"

Mr. Slick nodded. "Yeah. They can let you out sooner if they want to, but it didn't work that way with us. Me and my buddy and them fifteen other guys."

"And what happened to the fifteen?"

"They all struck out. The whole fifteen. Thirteen of 'em are back in Sheridan and two of them are dead. One of them got it only about a month ago. Five policemen and just this one kid and they killed him. He was pullin' a job. Burglary. Him and two other fellows. The police caught 'em and this kid tried to run; I guess he figured he couldn't pull no more time. Being locked up is harder on some kids than others and some kids, when they get out, they tell you that they just can't pull no more time—that they will go crazy if they get caught for something and sent back. They will tell you that

they'd rather take a chance on gettin' killed than have to serve more time and I guess that is how it was with this kid. They had him cold and he tried to skip and they got him. Five of them shot him at the same time and they don't even know which one of them killed him."

"And what do you think when one of your buddies gets killed?"

"It gives you the chills. You can't shake it out of your mind. You think, maybe the next time it will be me. You never been shot at by a cop and you don't know . . ."

"But even though some of the boys get killed, you'd say there are a lot of them who figure they can beat it—a lot of them who think it pays to be a thief."

"Well, they get out and they want some of that quick money. Sometimes they say they only want one or two jobs to get started, so they can get some clothes and go looking for a job . . . legit. They figure they can get lucky and get a bundle, like the fellows who took Brinks; and they talk a lot about those fellows who took Brinks."

Teen-age criminals like to discuss every angle of how the job was worked out and the vast amount of loot it netted. They do not mention that eight of the eleven Brinks robbery gang were indicted on one hundred and sixty-nine counts and that they were tried and sentenced in the summer of 1956. Two members of the gang were dead; the informer made Number Eleven. This was indeed a classic robbery and an equally classic example of criminal frustration.

With this in mind, I said to Mr. Slick, "The fellows who took Brinks never got much out of it. Don't you know that when you take big money like that, you can't spend it? They almost always have the numbers on that kind of money and it's a dead giveaway if you try to spend it."

"They don't figure it like that. All the kids figure is getting the money and what they can do with it after they get it. That's all they think about: cars and girls and big livin'. It

just goes to their heads, like takin' dope, thinkin' about big money."

"And what do you think the authorities should do with kids like this? Keep them locked up?"

"Well, what can they do? When it is time to turn you loose, they've got to turn you loose. But some of those guys are hard to make out and you don't know what they will do when you turn 'em loose. They're quiet and they don't say nothing and they don't mingle with nobody else but keep to themselves. And some of these quiet Johns are just as dangerous as the ones that do all the talking; more so, I mean."

"What about you and your gang of thirty-nine? Are you dangerous?"

"Us? Hell, no! We are only lookin' out for ourselves, that's all. I haven't made contact with anybody since I been out. The guys that I hung out with . . . Well, we were all pretty good guys and didn't cause too much trouble. It was just fightin' and a few little things."

". . . What kind of homes do you come from? What are your people like? We'll skip you, but what about these other boys . . . What is the pattern of their lives? Do they have homes? Are they happy homes?"

"Well . . . mostly it is no good between the mothers and the fathers, if you know what I mean. I mean the mothers and fathers are separated and that's bad enough, and some of the guys, their parents work, you know, at nights mostly and when they can't watch the guys and that is bad too. I'll tell you what I think it is: it's families that don't give a damn about their kids. They let them run around the streets and do what they want to do and they don't care. If the kids are out all night, that is all right with their mothers and fathers. If the kid comes home, well, that is all right. If he comes home a little bit drunk, that is all right too. That's the kind of families that give you your headache. I mean they holler about the kids, but it is the parents' fault; they'll never

get anywhere with this idea, trying to shove it all on the kids. Why the hell don't they put some heat on the parents, if they want to solve this thing? The parents . . . Most of them are out bumming, themselves. Boozing it up. Goofing around with this one and that. Getting plastered, chasing some guy or some broad. Everybody knows what is going on. Why blame the kids?"

"And you think all this sets the stage for trouble?"

"Sure. The kids run loose, run around the streets. I see it every day. They talk about curfew and that don't mean a thing."

"Some kids complain about the curfew."

Mr. Slick shook his head. *He* never heard of any complaints.

He was obviously aware that the relatively small numbers of policemen available for street duty in Chicago can enforce the curfew. But the force is more urgently concerned with thieves, burglars, automobile accidents and fire duty, among other things, than with the question of interrogating underage youngsters. Yet despite the manpower shortage the City Council of Chicago sought to strengthen the curfew ordinance as of June 20, 1956, by extending what was called the "protection" of the curfew to seventeen-year-olds. Previously, the curfew applied to those sixteen years old and under.

In its new form, the curfew ordinance provides:

"It shall be unlawful for any person under the age of seventeen years of age to be on the streets between the hours of 11:30 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. on Fridays and Saturdays; between the hours of 10:30 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. on any other days, unless accompanied by and in charge of a parent, guardian or other proper companion of the age of twenty-one years or more, or unless engaged in some occupation or business in which such child may lawfully engage under the statutes of this state.

"Any police officer finding a child violating the provisions of this section shall warn the child to desist immediately from such violation and shall promptly report the violation to his superior officer, who shall cause a written notice to be served upon the parent, guardian or person in charge of such child, setting forth the manner in which this section has been violated. Any parent, guardian or person in charge of such child who shall knowingly permit such child again to violate the provisions of this section after receiving notice of the first violation shall be fined not less than five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars for each offense."

The ordinance is ineffectual, particularly in crowded low-income neighborhoods. Commissioner of Police Timothy J. O'Connor reported on August 15, 1957, that 5,508 warning notices were served upon the parents or guardians of children who were found violating the ordinance between June 20, 1956, and December 20, 1956.

On page twenty-two of the Chicago Youth Commission report to Mayor Richard J. Daley (December 31, 1957), there is an incredible statement attributed to the Police Commissioner: "Significantly, no repeat violations of the curfew ordinance were observed."

In this regard, there is reason to suspect that the police are not very observant. Since passage of the new ordinance, for example, three young girls—the Grimes sisters who lived back of the yards, and one Judith Mae Anderson who lived in the middle-class Austin district—were known to have been on the streets in violation of the curfew. Not only were they not observed by the police but they disappeared that night and were later found brutally murdered. No clue has yet been turned up to suggest where they went and with whom, nor has any trace been found of the identity of the murderer or murderers.

A curfew can only be effective if an entire community

faces the problem posed by children wandering the streets late at night. As Mr. Slick himself suggests, control begins when the law provides adequate facilities for taking children into custody and keeping them until such time as their parents or guardians are forced to come and get them.

In crowded neighborhoods, the curfew ordinance has the same significance as, say, the seldom-enforced jaywalking ordinance.

"There is a bunch of kids out where I live always hangin' on the corner till two, three in the morning. Just little ones, kids that are twelve or thirteen," Mr. Slick said.

"Just as you did when you were thirteen?"

"Well, it ain't right. Why don't they get after their folks? Why don't they find out where they are, the parents? They aren't home so they must be out doing somethin'. Or maybe they are home and they just don't care. They should have social workers talk to the people, the parents, and warn them about taking care of the kids all the time, instead of only when they get into trouble and get locked up and it's too late and everything."

"You mention social workers. I imagine you've seen a lot of social workers."

"Well, I don't know whether they do any good or not. They try to help you when you get in trouble. They want to get you straightened out and they do the best they can for you. But they don't go at it the way it will do much good. The only way to get anywhere with this thing is for the social agent to move in when the people are out drinkin', out boozin' it up and the kids are runnin' the streets. They should be rounding up the kids and taking them home and if the parents aren't home, they should investigate and find out why the hell they aren't home. When they start lockin' up the parents for not takin' care of their kids, then people are going to start thinkin' twice about it: they've *got* to take care

of 'em to protect themselves from being locked up. When they start taking care of their kids, the kids aren't going to be hanging around no street corners at two, three in the morning."

"And you say this is a job for social workers?"

"Look how they do it now: when I was locked up in the Juvenile Home, they came and talked to you and said 'do this, do that' and they worked around at getting you out of trouble. But it doesn't mean anything because you are locked up and the trouble has already begun; the damage is done. They should move in *before* the kids get in trouble. See where there is a bunch of kids standin' on the corner and ask them what are they doing on the corner at two, three in the morning. Why ain't you home? See? It's a lot of work, yeah, but they can go around and see kids on every corner in the city. Let the social guy go to the home and find out why the kids are out so late. You think something good comes from a bunch of kids hanging out on a corner in the middle of the night? Why not put the heat on the parents where it belongs. They got judges in the city, they got policemen; they can do something if they want to."

"And if you ran a police district?"

He thought this one over for a minute and commented, a little piously: "Every time I saw a bunch of kids on a corner late at night, WHAM!, in they'd go and I'd grab the parents. They've got a curfew. I have never seen it enforced once."

Enforcement varies from district to district. We told Mr. Slick, "Some kids say they enforce it too much."

"I've never seen it enforced. I see kids runnin' around the streets all hours of the night and the police don't do nothing about it."

"Maybe it's not as easy as you say. You take a gang like that old gang of yours; thirty-nine kids. You see thirty-nine kids on a corner and you get six or eight squads, if you can

get that many, and you try to grab every kid . . . It's pretty hard to do. Those kids will kick back at you, fight and run and throw things, just to show off in front of all the other kids, to uphold the honor of the gang."

"Well, you don't have to get 'em all in one grab; just get some of them. They'll give you an argument; they'll fight with you and call you names and everything, but just get some of them; the ones you get will tell you who the rest of them are. They'll be scared enough. The thing is, you can break that stuff up easy; they are only kids. It'd be work, sure; but I mean if they want to start preventing all the crime that is going on, that's how they got to go about it."

"Then you really don't believe that parents alone can control it?"

"Well . . . I'll tell you, and it goes for a lot of people: they are afraid of their children. That's what's wrong with them, like I said. You know you ain't gonna get nowhere with a kid when the kid knows you are afraid to put a hand on him."

"You mean that parents are physically afraid of their children?"

"Right. Lots of parents. You take a kid who is out of line and his father tells him to do this and do that; the kid will just look at him and say 'no.' And the father says, 'Oh, yes you will.' The father says, 'If you don't do what I say, I'm gonna sock you.' And the kid just looks at him and says, 'Go ahead.' So all right, the father slaps the kid or hits him and the kid will come right back and hit his old man or curse him out and throw something at him. Then there's a fight. A kid will fight like hell with his old man and if it happens just once, the father's going to think twice the next time, and chances are the father ain't going to say anything to the kid about how he's behaving no more."

"I don't think it happens very often."

"You bet it happens often. The father hollers and the kid

hollers back. The father hits the kid and the kid hits back. How are you going to handle a kid when the father is scared of his own kid? How you going to handle a kid who will clobber his old man?"

3

The third boy : "The Loner"

One of the dismal sights of American life, unobserved by all but a few, is the lineup of men packing into a heavily guarded bus for shipment to prison. They are linked together with handcuffs and the best any one of them can hope for is that he is not paired with a notorious criminal; if he is, he will likely end up the day with his picture on the front page of the big city newspapers.

Woeful resignation is characteristic of men at such times. They have at least temporarily exhausted their legal avenues and some are choked with humiliation at the shame they have placed on those who know and love them. Many feel they have failed friends who have gone into debt to pay fees of the lawyer who tried to and could not save them.

Resentment is turning to potential hate in these men and it will grow and take possession of some of them during the period of confinement ahead. There are some who will rage at their keepers, some who will plot with desperate cunning how to break free, and at whatever cost. There are others

who know at this hour of departure that a man can lose his mind in prison and they will terrify themselves with this obsession until a few of them do go stir crazy.

J. Edgar Hoover says that three out of every four criminals listed in the F.B.I.'s "most wanted" category were first arrested at the average age of sixteen. Year in and year out, the age of the men listed as "most wanted" averages thirty-seven. By that time of life, then, the three out of four have been in crime for twenty-one years and have been fingerprinted by various police authorities some thirteen times.

A hundred years ago, sociologists exploded with moral indignation over early studies of juvenile conditions in New York City. It was well documented that at that time the children of the poor were willing pupils in the school of stealing and vice. The frightening part of our present situation is the volume of our juvenile crime, regardless of economic background, and the fantastic rate at which that volume is expanding:

Some 500,000 young people are at this moment wards of the Juvenile and Family courts of the nation. And there has been a 40 per cent increase in the number of juveniles passing through the courts in the five years from 1952 to 1957. It is estimated by such agencies as the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare that some 1,500,000 persons between seven and seventeen were brought before the police departments of the nation in the last tabulated year, and more than one million cases were disposed of as "station adjustments"; in other words, either because of compassion, ennui or political pressure, policemen kept a great number of children out of the courts. The U.S. Children's Bureau has a further depressing statistic: it estimates that at least 500,000 "problem children" manage each year to escape direct involvement with the law.

If the present trend continues for the next five years—and those who know the problem believe that it will—it is

estimated that the Juvenile and Family courts will have the cases of some 750,000 children before them for adjudication and the police will seek to process about two million such troubled youngsters.

Juveniles who have been convicted of serious crimes have no knowledge of the statistics of the problem but would not question the figures, if told, because almost every one of their contemporaries is in one kind of difficulty or another. Like the Third Boy, a gentle-appearing boy, they are all part of the revolt and, like the others, in turn he either did not know or would not say what it was that had made him revolt.

The Third Boy was tall, thin, aesthetic-looking—and locked up in Bridewell, in Chicago. With the one exception of the new, two-story building in which juveniles serve time, Bridewell—also called the House of Correction—is a fenced-in collection of dilapidated buildings, located for three-quarters of a century in a dreary area directly south of the Criminal Courts building and the Cook County jail. The ancient Bridewell, housing a miserable collection of chronic drunks, petty thieves and sex offenders, is the City of Chicago jail. Former Warden Frank Sain—now Sheriff of Cook County—had run better places and during the period of his direction he was well aware that Bridewell was a classic example of a bad jail. When, a few years ago, his overcrowded and largely undirected inmates tore up the place in rebellion over the bad food, Sain conceded that the food was awful and that this was but one of the areas of legitimate complaint.

Serving six months in Bridewell for petty theft, and rather comfortable and docile about it, the Third Boy was called "The Loner" because he seemed to distrust everybody and clearly wished to remain by himself. They had first called him The Loner when, four years earlier, he had served time at Sheridan for the same offense. He had an aura about him that perplexed the boys he served time with, but they did not try to make fun of him. Instead, they accepted his

wishes in the matter and respected his obvious desire to keep to himself. This attitude of taking you for what you are, provided you do not cause trouble for other inmates, is part of the tolerance you find in reformatories and prisons. This seems to be typical of all institutions, regardless of the predominant age of the inmates.

The Loner was a sad-eyed boy who casually accepted the possibility that his next port of call might be Stateville. It was difficult to understand how he could be so casual. It is easy to understand the equation that is worked out in the mind of a mature criminal who plots to rob a bank and accepts as a professional risk the possibility that he may end up in prison. But what kind of equation does a juvenile thief evolve, risking his life and freedom with no prospect of real gain?

There are things hidden in the background of almost every boy in serious trouble. The secret of The Loner might be that he was once charged with assault to commit rape. Rape was the only subject that embarrassed the boy during our long conversation. He colored up and murmured that his was only a technical charge and that he really had not been guilty.

"They get in trouble and then they holler copper on you, that you raped them, and it *isn't* rape when they're willing. They only holler because they are trying to get some money out of your folks and they figure everybody will feel sorry for them that they were raped and not know they were bums that would lay anybody."

The crime of rape is, of course, a crime involving the use of force. The crime of seduction is quite another matter.

Whether it was entrapment by a girl or something less specific that had made The Loner what he was, he showed by his withdrawal from the world around him that he distrusted everybody and they, in turn, distrusted him. Though he was left to his own devices, he was regarded by the other

boys as odd, and the authorities opined that it was "useless" to try to get him to talk when we asked if we might interview him. They said he would not talk, but contrary to these official expectations, he did talk, and willingly. He minimized his crimes, as most young criminals do, and with no apparent resentment he accepted the disaster of his life as inevitable, which most young criminals do not. His attitude was that, well, he wasn't getting anywhere and if they put him in jail for stealing cheap things, what could he do about it?

The Loner was more gently spoken than most of the boys who are locked up—in Bridewell or elsewhere. There seemed to be some mysterious quality about him. He was one of the hordes of young men behind bars, certainly, but he was somehow different from the others. He had had more education than they and was somewhat more cultured. He would speak with clarity and simplicity and then, unexpectedly, would slide into the jargon of the delinquents.

This reminded me, despite the age difference and the gulf which separated the crimes for which each was sentenced, of Nathan Leopold with whom I had had several meetings during his long stay at Stateville. Admittedly, Leopold was brilliant, even erudite, yet—when you asked him about prison life—he became just another con using the common phrases in exactly the form and tone employed by the ill-educated killers and thieves with whom he was serving time. Nathan Leopold seemed to have two personalities. So did The Loner.

Searching for a key to the personality of this scholarly-appearing boy, I asked The Loner about his background.

"Where did you come from?"

"I was born in Israel. Tel Aviv, Israel. Nineteen years ago."

"Your people were Israelis?"

"My mother is from Israel and my father from Egypt. That is, he was born in Egypt."

"And when did you come to this country?"

"I came here twice; once I went back. The first time I came to this country I was only two years old. Then much later I went back. When I came here again, I was thirteen. That was five years ago. My mother and I came here then and my two sisters remained in Israel."

"What about your father?"

"He was here all the time. In San Antonio, Texas. My mother and my father were divorced."

He looked at me as if expecting some invidious comment. What I said was, "When was the first time you were in trouble?"

"I was nine years old when I was first arrested . . ."

"Was that in Israel?"

"No, it was here. It is all in the record. I was sent back to my mother in Israel when the arrest was straightened out, and then a few years later she brought me back to this country.

"What was the charge when you were nine?"

"I don't remember. I think it was Juvenile. I mean, I ran away from school or it was stealing or something like that. There was so much—all I remember is that I was sent to Parental School. They kept me there for about a year and then gave me a release. That was about eight years ago, something like that."

"And then somebody sent you back to your mother in Israel?"

"Yes, and then about five years or so ago she brought me back here. And I got in trouble again. It's part of my record. I stole off the beach. Purses and wallets and things, and I got caught and I got the Juvenile Home."

"How do you steal 'off the beaches'?"

"You watch for people when they go in the water and leave their belongings behind."

"Did you tail people you thought might have money?"

"No, not all the time. Sometimes I would. Sometimes you'd just see the stuff and grab it. They'd be in the water and nobody pays any attention to anybody on a beach."

"Did you steal anything besides purses?"

"No."

"No radios or anything like that?"

"No. I wanted money. I needed only the money."

"What was the most money you ever got?"

"The most? About sixty dollars. I was lucky."

"What did you do with it?"

"Nothing much. I guess I really wasn't very lucky. I got caught that same night. That was up in Wisconsin, at a beach in Milwaukee. They had put me in a boarding school and I ran away from the school, then I got this money off the beach and stole some more money from a store. Somebody 'made me' . . . you know, spotted me, and gave my identification to the police. When I went to the station, the train station, to get a train for Chicago . . . well, the Milwaukee police grabbed me. That was about four years ago. I was fourteen."

"What happened to you?"

"Nothing much. I stayed in the police station for a few days and then my mother came up from Chicago and took me home. I guess I promised I would never do anything bad again, but the next month I was arrested for attempted burglary. I took a hard fall for that one."

"Sheridan?"

"Yes, I was sent to the reformatory at Sheridan. They gave me three to five years and that's a lot of time for somebody just turning fifteen. You've got to serve three years and nine months before you hit the max and I knew I would be almost nineteen before I would walk down the street again."

"How bad is Sheridan?"

"Well, it's got it all over a lot of other places. They give you pretty firm treatment at Sheridan, as I hear they do at

Stateville. But the food is good and you get recreation. They make you go to school so that you can learn a trade, if you want to."

From the standpoint of creature comforts, a convict is better off in a Federal institution than in most of the State prisons. His quarters and food are better. But from the standpoint of discipline, the con will find that the expected standards of behavior and the watchfulness of the guards in a Federal prison are much more severe than would be the case in most penitentiaries maintained by State authorities.

The U.S. Parole Board says that it costs the Federal government $1,394.30 to house and otherwise provide for one prisoner. There is no dependable figure on how much the average cost is to the various States to keep a man or boy locked up for one year.

The Federal government has, as it should have, a definite interest in the vast numbers of juveniles who are locked up by the States and the counties. A sizable share of these will eventually become Federal prisoners as they grow older—but no wiser—and become involved with criminal matters that violate Federal law.

Presently, the government assumes only a small share of the cost of keeping juvenile delinquents in prisons, for the Federal authorities can exercise a legal claim on only a small number of the nation's juvenile offenders. But with every passing year, the Federal share of the burden is increasing. Three hundred and eighty-seven youths were committed to Federal institutions under the Federal Youth Correction Act in 1956, but six hundred and twenty-six were sent up only a year later. The 1958 figures are nine hundred and nineteen.

"How long did you stay at Sheridan?" I asked The Loner.

"Oh, I served the max. and then, when I got off the train from there, my mother met me at the station and I guess I promised to be a good boy and all that again . . . they all promise that. But that was only four months ago and here

I am in Bridewell. It's peculiar how things work out. I'm doing six months . . ."

"What was it this time?"

"Well . . . I got caught stealing from a church."

"Poor boxes and things like that?"

"No. I was stealing pamphlets and books. From St. Peter's in the loop, across from the Morrison Hotel."

"That seems unusual. How do you figure a Jewish boy from Tel Aviv stealing books from a Catholic Church on Madison Street in Chicago?"

"Well, the truth is, I'm a Catholic now. I'm a convert to the Catholic religion so I knew where I was when I was in that church. I don't know why I stole those books. I would never go into a church with a plan to steal books. It just came to my mind. I wanted some money and there were the books in front of me so I took them and sold them. I sold them at secondhand bookstores. They don't give you much. There isn't much money in hot books, but they will give you something."

"How much did they give you?"

"Well, I had quite a bunch of books—I didn't have a plan to steal them; I would never go into a church with the intention of stealing books. They gave me six dollars."

"Do you think they knew that you really didn't own the books?"

"The first time they didn't. But after that they refused to buy them."

"You paid them another call with more books?"

"Yes. I had the books and they said 'no.' "

"Did they finger you?"

"Later. But they didn't holler copper on me. How could they? They couldn't be sure I had sold them hot books."

"Well, I don't understand how you did get caught if they didn't finger you?"

"I got caught right in St. Peter's. I went back to get some

more books and they grabbed me in the act of taking the books. They saw me and they grabbed me. They put me in a room to wait and then the police came in and took me to the station. When they brought me before the judge, he listened for a minute and said six months in Bridewell. And here I am."

"Surely you could do better working. Did you ever work?"

"Yes, I've worked. Lots of places. Stores mostly. Wholesale places and retail places. I worked in a small store over on Halstead and Roosevelt. I worked in a sales supply company. I worked for Mandel Brothers, the big department store."

"What kind of work do you do?"

"Stockroom. Stock boy."

"Right in there with the merchandise?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever steal anything from these stores? Did you ever take anything from Mandel's?"

"Yes. From Mandel's I took some books."

"What kind of books?"

"Well, religious books. I took them out of the shelves in the book department. It's easy to steal books. Once you've got them under your arm, you can walk around with books and nobody will pay any attention to you."

"But you stole these books to get money?"

"Yes."

"Was this before or after you got picked up for stealing the books from St. Peter's?"

"This was before then, before St. Peter's."

"Did you get caught at Mandel's?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"You see, I made a mistake. The mistake I made was that I took them back to the same store. Right to Mandel Broth-

ers where I worked. I stole the books there and then I brought them in and tried to get money for them, on a return. I got caught."

"Did they prosecute you?"

"No, they just fired me and when it came up for trial I got supervision for a year and I figured I would keep clean. But then I got into that business at St. Peter's. And here I am now in Bridewell."

"You have just turned nineteen and you've spent four or five years locked up in various places. Is that right?"

"That's right."

"And as I see it, you didn't get two thousand dollars out of it, all together."

"That's right. Nowhere close to two thousand."

"You sell your time pretty cheap."

"I guess."

"Where are you going to spend the rest of your life? You want a reservation at Pontiac or Stateville?"

"When I get out of here . . . I don't want to pull any more time. I'm going to keep to the right side of the road this time. I'm not going to do anything wrong again."

"That's the way you think about it now?"

"That's the way I think about it . . . now." His quiet voice trailed off.

"I'd like to ask you what you think of the kids that are locked up. All of them. Do you think that basically it is their fault or do you think it is someone else's fault? What do you think?"

"Basically it is somebody else's fault. It is mostly their mother's fault. It is the family's fault when a boy is in trouble all the time. Mostly, these kids you see here were never brought up in a family life. They just roam the streets. If they had a mother who was a real mother it would be different. Why, just last week a guy got out of here and went

home, and before the week was up he was shot in the head by the police. He was in a stickup and he shot at a policeman and he killed him."

"You can't blame that on his mother, can you?"

"Well, it had to start somewhere. You don't start with stickups. It starts with some small trouble and it grows. From a boy's early childhood. How can you learn the lesson if you never had the right kind of childhood? It is the kid who gets into the trouble, but it's having no family or no mother who really *is* a mother that got him that way."

"So you don't think the boys at Sheridan and the boys here in Bridewell have much of a chance to get on the straight and narrow—and stay there?"

"Most of them would like to. Nobody likes to be in trouble all the time and pull time all the time. There's only one here I know of who says it is worth it. There is one kid here who operated kind of big and he says that when he gets out he is moving into bigger things. Says the only way to beat this is to keep on going up all the time."

"Where do you think he will end up?"

"I don't know. Stateville, I guess, if he means what he says. And I think he does mean what he says."

"Does he blame it on his mother?"

"No. Most of them never blame anything on their mothers. You will find that most boys in trouble will defend their mothers. Also their sisters. A boy can be guilty of everything in the book and his sister may be a real bum, but he will fight if anybody says anything about her."

"But you figure that it is a boy's family that wrecks the boy?"

"Yes. Bad families are mostly to blame. It is a difficult question."

"And it ends up with the boy on a slab at the morgue or sleeping at Stateville?"

"Yes."

"Do you think you might end up sleeping at Stateville?"

"I don't know. I hope not."

"And all these other boys . . . You think a lot of them will end up at Stateville?"

"Of course they will. The men in Stateville right now came from places like this Bridewell."

"Do you see no hope? Isn't there anything that people could do to prevent it?"

"Well . . . I don't know. I don't know the answer to that one. It's a difficult question. There isn't anybody, is there, who has the answer to that one?"

4

The fourth boy : "Baseball"

"I feel good when I read in the papers that a copper has been shot. I read in the papers one time that two coppers was shot at the same time when they went to pick up an ex-con and, say, I felt better than when the White Sox take two in one day from the Yankees." So, happily, speaks a criminal in his teens.

"All you 'goody' guys hollerin' about crime! Everybody's got a racket, everybody's tryin' to beat somebody else. How you expect that kids gonna be different?" the boy adds.

The teen-age hood, with his obscene cawing in the night, may wreck your sleep as he takes part in a neighborhood brawl. He may hold a knife at your ribs, or a gun, or grip your throat in the wedge of his arm if he catches you alone and unwary in a dark place or in the vestibule of your apartment house. He may steal your car, outwitting the ignition system with a piece of tinfoil, and give it more abuse in two hours than you would give it in two years. He may

rape your daughter or your wife, or set fire to your business or you may find the dark stain of his blood on your office floor at the spot where a policeman caught him and killed him. You may dismiss him from your mind, telling yourself that the question of dealing with young hoodlums is not your affair. But it might become your affair; the young hood might well be the free-wheeling son of those nice people you know in the next block, he might be your nephew, or you might even be called to a police station some night and informed by an officer who looks at you with misgivings that the boy they caught robbing the A & P is *your* boy.

Whoever he is, the young punk who causes grave trouble will not cease to exist because so-called decent people do not want to think about him or try to solve the riddle of what to do with him by fobbing his problem off on others. Part of the difficulty of deciding what to do with him lies in the fact that we are not sure what he is and we recognize him, too late, only by what he does. The juvenile delinquent has escaped precise definition. There is wide variation in the law as to just *who* and *what* he is, and those who write the definitions are far from agreed on exactly when the anti-social behavior of a juvenile should classify him as a delinquent.

The Federal statute reads only that: "A 'juvenile' is a person who has not attained his eighteenth birthday, and 'juvenile delinquency' is the violation of a law of the United States committed by a juvenile and not punishable by death or life imprisonment" (Title 18, Chap. 403-5031).

The State of Illinois, on the other hand, seeks to define every possible kind of delinquency. The Illinois statutes provide, among many other things, that a child is a delinquent, legally, if he leaves home without parental consent, grows up in idleness, attempts to jump on a moving train, uses profane language or consorts with persons of evil reputation. Miss Mary L. Shaughnessy, Superintendent of the Illinois State Training School for Girls, ridiculed the Illinois defini-

tions in a speech to the City Club of Chicago on April 21, 1958. Miss Shaughnessy observed, "There are few adults today who at one time or another in their youth might not have been deemed a 'delinquent child' as outlined in one or more stipulations of the Illinois definition."

But a juvenile criminal is not concerned with the academic problem of how the law defines him. A juvenile criminal believes that the only real crime that concerns him is the crime of getting caught.

Federal law on delinquency is principally concerned not with saying what the trouble-making boy or girl is but with the problem of what you do with a juvenile criminal after you catch him.

Limiting consideration to violations of Federal law, the Federal statutes further provide that: "District Courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction of proceedings against juvenile delinquents. The proceeding shall be without a jury. The consent required to be given by the juvenile shall be given him in writing before a judge of the District Court of the United States having cognizance of the alleged violation, who shall fully apprise the juvenile of his rights and of the consequences of such consent. Such consent shall be deemed a waiver of trial by jury" (Title 18, Chap. 403, 5032, 5033).

Federal law spells out what should be done with the juvenile prior to the time he faces the judge and what latitude is available to the judge if the juvenile is found guilty.

Regarding the procedure to be followed when the juvenile is apprehended: "Whenever a juvenile is arrested for an alleged violation of any law of the United States, the arresting officer shall immediately notify the Attorney General.

"If the juvenile is not forthwith taken before a committing magistrate, he may be detained in such juvenile home or other suitable place of detention, but shall not be detained

in a jail or similar place of detention, unless, in the opinion of the arresting officer, such detention is necessary to secure the custody of the juvenile, or to insure his safety and that of others.

"In no case shall such detention be for a longer period than is necessary to produce the juvenile before a committing magistrate" (Title 18, Chap. 403-5035).

The judge who hears the case and finds the juvenile guilty has an election of punishments: "If a court finds a juvenile to be a delinquent, it may place him on probation for a period not exceeding his minority, or commit him to the custody of the Attorney General for a like period.

"The Attorney General may designate any public or private agency or foster home for the custody, care, subsistence, education and training of the juvenile during the period for which he was committed" (Title 18, Chap. 403-5034).

There is nothing in Federal law that places responsibility for juvenile delinquency upon the parents or guardians, although they might well have been chiefly responsible for making a bad boy by neglect or evil example. Federal legislation is not concerned with how a juvenile criminal got to be a criminal. Sociologists, recognizing that this is the basic problem, do not grant immunity to the parents but rightly search for clues as to what the parents may have contributed to the problem of a boy or girl in the lockup. H. A. Bloch and F. T. Flynn in their work, *Delinquency*, try to isolate and trace the causes of the vastly accelerated incidence of juvenile crime; they place a good share of the blame on accelerated social transitions of recent decades, in which the authority of the male parent has been dissipated and in which the former controlling influences of family life have ceased to be operative. Bloch and Flynn feel that a social vacuum has been created that bewilders adults: "During a period of confusion about moral standards and vague, ill-defined limits

of personal behavior, our young people are at a loss to know what is expected of them. If adults are confused about these things, how can one expect more of children?"

In other words, there has been a social if not a moral breakdown among adults in recent times and, as our cynical young criminal put it, "How you expect that kids gonna be different?"

Although periods of adult confusion might be partly responsible, it would be foolish to say that every boy who serves time for a serious matter is merely the victim of the social breakdown and that he himself is innocent of blame, that his family and societal background alone put him where he is. Once he is locked up, however, the boy is greatly influenced by those with whom he is imprisoned and he readily acquires criminal knowledge; it is undeniable that the time a boy spends in prison transforms today's child into tomorrow's criminal. The irony is that the teen-age boy who becomes a criminal is impervious to the good influences of family and friends, but soaks up the methods and philosophy of cheating society when he is placed in a penal institution. This is the difficult question: why does a criminally inclined boy deride and reject the good example of decent people only to surrender himself to imitation of lawless young rebels with whom he shares life in a reformatory? Why is it that he has seemingly no taste for the good yet has a sharp appetite for the evil? The basic clue to a solution of juvenile delinquency, seems to lie in an understanding of this paradox of almost total non-rapport with the good and a corresponding rapport with the evil. This is, to me, the question penologists and psychiatrists must resolve.

There is evidence in many cases that family and society tricked the boy into committing criminal acts, the way some people are tricked into taking narcotics. Because of parental rejection, real or imagined, or due to his own petulant reaction over bad treatment, real or imagined, in his neighbor-

hood, church or school, a boy may decide to bolster his ego with minor adventures into crime. The boys who do this are like youngsters who start smoking marijuana for kicks but find that it isn't exciting enough and, just for more kicks, try heroin. Heroin is a vicious drug, a derivative of morphine; it mollifies anxiety but produces a craving so intense that an addict will commit any criminal act, even kill, to keep himself supplied. Not all who play with marijuana end up enslaved to heroin; not all who dabble in small-fry crime become involved in serious criminal matters. But in both cases, it is easy enough to get hooked.

There are physical differences, of course, between the delinquent who has graduated to big-time crime and the marijuana smoker who starts squirting heroin into his veins. Both may be thieves, although the addict is a more desperate thief when he wakes up shaking and sweating, his body pumping with a terrible demand for the narcotic. The arms of a majority of teen-age criminals do not carry the black marks of needle punctures. The addict has no sexual drive to get him involved in rapes and girl battles; he has no desire to increase his esteem in the eyes of other people; he wants only to retain contact with his source and buy what white powder he needs in what he calls "flats," to put the powder in solution in the metal cap of a coke bottle, place a lighted match underneath, draw the solution up with a syringe, and at last pop the needle into his vein. The addict is worse off in every way than the teen-age criminal; he lives with a frightening awareness that he must face the dawn of each day with all its recurrent difficulties, chief of which is getting the money to buy his heroin.

Ex-criminals who resolve to reform fight an enduring battle characterized by peaks of crisis and extending for several years after their decision to avoid crime. And even when the battle seems to be won, it is impossible to say that the ex-con will not waver violently at times of stress and

again come crashing down. All youth workers concede that when you work on the rehabilitation of a teen-ager who has taken what he calls a "fall," you live a life of frustration and frequent disappointment.

An inner core of secrecy develops within the former criminal: it is exceedingly difficult to elicit truth from a boy who has been caught and convicted. Even if he knows you, he does not like to discuss his problems and he resents a line of questioning that intrudes upon the secrets of his mind and soul. He has faith neither in you nor in the things he thinks you represent. You are wasting your breath when you talk to him of virtue and of the attractions of decent society; he has an ingrained distrust by now of things that are supposed to be good for him.

Protesting that he believes in right living and that he is now reformed and will never waver—agreeing with all you say to him because he thinks that is what is expected of him and knows it is the easiest way to conclude an uncomfortable conversation—a junior criminal will let you talk him into the waters of Siloe to be washed clean, mumbling a few prayers with you as he goes. Actually, he is an apostate; he has a Doubting Thomas' sceptical ear for the truth of what he has been told. He has been hurt once, whether by his own fault or no, and he is "gun-shy" for there is no assurance you can give him that he will not be hurt again. He will listen, more or less politely, to what you have to say; the all-important thing is what you can get him to say to you, if anything.

The Fourth Boy—they called him "Baseball" because he was a rabid sports fan—was hard to talk to. Cynical about the possibilities of reform, argumentative, coating his bitterness with a kind of sugar but running out of sugar in some notable outbursts of what he really believed.

Baseball was nineteen years old when we talked with him. He looked poor; his clothing was clean but the trousers

were not pressed, his shirt was worn, and the heels of his shoes were run down.

Baseball was tall and thin and, like many of the others we talked with, he was exceedingly nervous. He had a hurt look. You could tell at a glance that Baseball had suffered a great deal and in the flashes of arrogance that lit up his tight, intense face, you got a feeling that he was destined to suffer a great deal more.

Baseball was "on the scenes," meaning he was a free man, when we talked with him. I knew he had been at Sheridan and I knew that the neighborhood he came from, a low-income neighborhood of second-generation Western European immigrants, had produced a great many boys just like him. That was all I knew about him. I decided to use it as a basis for the direct approach.

"I want to know about your family. What does your father do for a living?"

"Don't know. Don't live with him. Live by myself."

"What about your mother?"

"My real mother is dead. I got a stepmother. My mother raised me. I was about fourteen when she died. Fifteen."

"Were you in trouble then?"

"Yeah."

"How did you get in trouble?"

"Well . . . well, we used to hang around in gangs and then we'd hang on the street corners and then the police started chasin' us off. And then that's when we started to get into trouble, when they started chasin' us off. We weren't doin' nothin' on the street corners, just standin' there and talkin'. Nothin'; not makin' any trouble *what*soever. And then we had to go out and look for somethin' to do and we would just go out and steal and just mess around with cars and all that. You know, you gotta have somethin' to do."

"What do you mean, 'You've got to have something to do'?"

"Well, what you gonna do? They don't let you play any ball and, if you got a record and they know about it, you ain't no good."

"You don't turn to thieving, just because they chase you off the corner. There must be more to it than that."

"It's just the idea. We weren't doin' nuttin' on the corner, so why did they mess with us?"

"Why did you hang around the corners? Why didn't you stay home?"

"Why stay home? What's there to do at home?"

"Well, you have a mother and father . . . any brothers or sisters?" Baseball nodded assent, "and you've got a radio at home. Probably you have television," again he nodded, "you have food; you have lots of things. Don't you?"

"I wouldn't call that too much activity. It ain't no good. I'll take the corners."

"I know, but isn't that just what the police object to?"

"No. No, it ain't that. . . . It's . . . it's the damned nosey neighbors. They think we're makin' noise; we don't make no noise. There's a gang down the street that makes the noise. So they come up and pick on us. Then the police pick on us."

". . . How far did you go in school?"

"One year of high school. At Waller. I got kicked out for cuttin' classes."

"Why did you cut classes?"

"I didn't want to go to school. I just didn't like it."

"But you had a whole lifetime. . . . You had to get set to make a living."

"I'm not doin' too bad now. I can't complain."

"But you could do better, couldn't you? With an education?"

"Oh, I don't know. It don't help. Right now I'm a truck driver. That pays good."

"Well, if you had an education perhaps you could run the trucking company."

"I don't think that's possible."

"Why not?"

"Takes too much time."

"Well, what do you want to do with your time? Hang around the corner?"

"I have my fun."

"How do you have your fun?"

"By just bein' around the guys."

". . . How old were you when you first got into trouble? Were you in the first year of high school then?"

"Yeah. I just got kicked out of school and then I got in trouble. They kicked me off the corner and I went out and tried to find something else to do with myself. I went out and found a house to get into."

"How did you learn how to get into a house?"

"I just figured I'd watch for the people to leave the house and then go and break the window."

"Didn't you worry about attracting attention?"

"No, and I don't now. People generally mind their own business."

"That first time, did you know what you were looking for?"

"No, it was just the chance you took."

"What did you want?"

"Mostly money. Didn't amount to much, not enough to serve time for. But I done time for it."

"How many houses did you go into before you were caught?"

"Quite a few."

"Twenty?"

"You could say that. Yeah, about twenty."

"And how much did you get out of it?"

"I couldn't actually tell you that. It didn't amount to too much."

"You took other things besides money?"

"Oh, yeah. Clocks, radios . . . Rings, jewelry . . . Still didn't amount to too much. Not enough to serve time for."

"How many radios or clocks can you use?"

"It's not how many you can use; it's how many you can sell."

"Where do you sell them?"

"To anybody who wants to buy 'em."

"Pawn shops?"

"We never went to no pawn shops. You steal something, all you got to do is ask people. There's always somebody that's gonna buy something if it's a good radio or somethin' and they can buy it cheap. There's larceny in everybody, like I said."

"Do the buyers know it's hot?"

"You don't have to tell 'em it's hot."

"But you know they know it's hot?"

"Sure. But they ain't gonna do nuthin' about it."

"Will they beat you down on the price?"

"All that we're lookin' for is a way to get money. We ain't lookin' for nuthin' else, see. We ain't gonna argue with 'em. We're just gettin' rid of it, that's all. As long as we got them things, they ain't no good to us. What we want is not the stuff but the money. Money."

"You mean you want money for girls, cars, or what?"

"Oh, you can have 'em. You don't have to have 'em, though. But that's the general principle, yes."

"Girls, booze, cars and things. . . . That's the general principle?

"Sure. You gotta have a girl every now and then and it takes a car."

Baseball was quite casual; to him, as to most of the teen-agers we talked with, girls and cars were necessities of life to be picked up and used, then tossed aside according to one's mood. There is considerable evidence that picking up girls can be hazardous, but this does not seem to bother

them. The U. S. Public Health Service said in a recent report that 200,000 teen-agers of both sexes acquire syphilis and/or gonorrhea each year. This figure would not impress a boy like Baseball, but it means that about half of the national total of venereal cases is acquired by boys and girls under the age of twenty. There was a sharp downward trend in the volume of VD when penicillin was first discovered to be an almost sure-fire cure, but teen-age indifference has by now reversed the trend.

At a Washington, D. C., health conference held last year, Dr. Abraham Gelperin, health director of Des Moines, Iowa, stated that teenage incidence of gonorrhea had increased so sharply that "the fifteen to nineteen age group now must be considered the key to any control program." It was established at that same conference that, unlike juvenile crime, a large percentage of which admittedly stems from broken homes, the teenagers who acquire venereal diseases frequently are the children of well-adjusted parents and come from good backgrounds. This fact suggests that the youngsters themselves are symptomatic of a general moral breakdown in our society as a whole.

In talking with Baseball, these findings came quickly to mind, yet it would have been fruitless to pursue the matter with him. We dropped the question of girls and concentrated on cars.

"You steal cars, don't you?"

"Sure I do."

Matter-of-factly, he disclosed almost at once how important a part stolen cars played in his life.

". . . When did they catch you after the twenty-odd burglaries? How did they catch you? Do you remember the night you got caught?"

"Yeah, I remember how I got caught. I got picked up in a car. A hot car. I was with this friend of mine. Just the two of us. And somebody finked about the burglaries and other

cars and that, and then they tagged us for all of them. Somebody finked on us. They told on us. Told the coppers."

"Somebody you knew?"

"Yeah. They were in on 'em with us, the burglaries, and the cops picked them up and the finks figured they'd get a little less time for it or they'd just get 'supervision' so they told on us. We got sent up to Sheridan. It was about five years ago. I was fourteen."

"Sent up for burglary when you were fourteen?"

"That's right. There's kids up there twelve and thirteen years old."

"How long were you at Sheridan?"

"Four and a half years. I ain't been out long."

"You got to know a lot about it in four and a half years."

"I got to know all about it."

"Would you say that the people are right who call Sheridan and St. Charles and all these reformatories 'schools of crime'?"

"You mean, do you learn things there?"

"Yes."

"Sure you learn things there."

"What do you learn?"

"You learn everything there is to learn. Mostly every crime you can think of."

"Well, how do you learn it?"

"Somebody else'll tell you how they pulled their jobs. They're always braggin' about it, I mean. And there's ways they can show you, as far as that goes."

"You mean out in the yard? They talk about it out in the yard?"

"No, not just in the yard; it's all over."

"Is it constant?"

"No, it ain't constant. They just like to brag."

"But do they talk to each other about how to pull a particular job?"

"What's wrong with that?"

"Do they teach each other how to go into a currency exchange, or how to go into a gas station? How to . . ."

"That don't mean anything, what they talk about. You think every guy at Sheridan should be in prison! There are boys in the Sheridan reformatory that I, if I had anything to do with it, well, they would never be there. Like there is murderers there. They're the nicest kids I ever met."

"Murderers?"

"That's right. Murderers."

"Why do you say they're the nicest kids you ever met?"

"They just act that way. I know 'em. I lived with 'em for four and a half years."

"But they killed someone."

"So what? Cry' sake, they were mad when they did it. They were just crazy mad at somebody and they killed them. See? What's the matter with you? Somebody loses their mind, you blame 'em for it? It's just that they won't, they just don't give 'em a chance. They're sent up for a long time and, well, that kid's forgotten about. He was thirteen, fourteen years old when he went in and—what the hell—you gonna have a grudge against him all the rest of his life?"

"The kid will get out. What's going to happen when he comes out?"

"He's gonna have a grudge."

"You mean, he'll kill somebody else?"

"Not necessarily. He ain't gonna kill nobody, maybe. But I ain't gonna say he's gonna turn good. Why should he turn good? You think he should turn good just 'cause somebody *wants* he should turn good? What the f—— is the matter with you?"

"Why should they let him out if they don't think he will 'turn good'? Why should social agencies bother helping a punk who killed somebody and may kill somebody else?"

"Well, you can take social agencies and jam 'em. I seen

how they work, plenty times, and I just don't think they are any damn good. They'll give you one chance, maybe two, and if you foul up then, well, they just won't give you another one. They'll just say, well, he's just no goddam good. That's what happened to most of those kids out there at Sheridan. They just never gave 'em a chance. Oh, yeah, they have meetin's and they talk big and they're weepin' around and all that . . . but they see the kid only onc't or twice a month. That's all they see the kid and if you ask 'em, they know all about the kid. They don't know a f . . . . n' thing. They don't know *nuthin'* about the kid. He's bad, that's all they know. If he has done one thing wrong in his life, he's bad. He's marked, that's what he is. Every kid that's out at Sheridan is marked."

"All right, he's marked." I agreed with that. "A boy comes out and he's got the mark, and all he really knows is what he's been told about using a gun or how to break into a loan company or how to rob a drug store. That's all he knows."

"No. He knows more. They got trades out there. Sheridan. They teach you trades."

"I know," I conceded. "But he is told these 'other things,' too. And the other things are easier than working at a trade. It's rough to make a go of it on the outside with a trade when you've got the mark. You said so yourself, and isn't that the way most of them figure it? Isn't that so?"

"Yeah," Baseball said, "I guess that is so. That's where people should help them when they get out. Only nobody wants to help you. Nobody wants to look after you; you've got to look after yourself."

"What about your folks?"

"Well, you can't leave it up to your folks. Sometimes what they think is right, is wrong for you; and what they think is wrong, is right. They just don't see your point of view. That don't help."

"But don't you think that the wisdom, the know-how, of an older group of people is sometimes superior to . . ."

"Oh, hell, I ain't condemnin' nobody. It's just the idea that if anybody tries to help you they will help you only onc't. If you foul up, you're done; they don't give you no more chance. They talk big, all them people that are supposed to help, but mostly they only talk."

". . . You were only a burglar. You weren't a 'stickup guy'?"

"No, I never done that."

"But you've known a lot of stickup guys?"

"Oh, sure."

"Where do they get the guns?"

"Well, a lot of times they'll burglarize a place and there'll be a gun layin' around."

"Do they ever burglarize a place just to get a gun?"

"Well, a couple of times I know it happened. They knew the guns were there. They get the guns and then they go out on a job."

"What kind of stickups would a newcomer try?"

"Well, what they would actually try first, it wouldn't be with a gun. They'd try strong-arm robbery, to see how it was, and then they would move their way up. That's how it would start, with strong-arm. If they got . . . well, if they weren't gettin' too much there, there would be grocery stores and cigarette stores and, finally, currency exchanges and so on; just move up the line, gradual-like."

"But what keeps them at it? They must know they'll get caught."

"Well, it's like this: some guys got the wrong girls and they have to give 'em everything and they're just baitin' 'em on, the girls are. They want this and they want that and then they have to go out and get some money, the boys do."

"And if the risk is high, they just go ahead and take a chance?"

"Oh, they like to take the easiest way they can find. I mean, they like the risk to be low, real low, where it's just about a sure thing. They don't want no trouble that can happen."

"But they'll take a chance to keep a girl? Is that it?"

"Sure they will. Most of 'em will."

"Why? Is a girl that important?"

"Why ask me? I guess girls are important, the way some of those guys feel. I wouldn't do anything for a girl. If some guys are crazy enough to go out and rob a bank for a girl . . . Well, that's their tough luck; it ain't mine. I mean, they're either goin' to get killed or sent away or something. They're goin' to get caught eventually. So I just don't know why the hell they do it in the first place. They go and do . . . Well, not for *no* girl, I don't."

"But *they* do it for a girl?"

"Sure they do. And they do it for a lot of other reasons. Maybe some want a car and some want money in their pockets . . . Lots of reasons."

". . . Did you ever know of anybody in your group of friends who made a good hit? Anybody who really made it?"

"Well, since I been out we ain't actually done nothing. I mean, we're tryin' to keep inside the law. I know guys who done it, though. I know quite a few of 'em. They don't hit very good and they spend everything. They want clothes, they want cars, they just want the money to spend; to make them feel big. It's a lot easier to go and steal it than it is to work for it."

"But you said a minute ago that the odds are no good; you get caught or killed . . ."

"Sure; that's why I'm workin'. Some people know it and some don't. I can tell 'em what to do: work. But I can't tell

if they're gonna do it or keep on with the stealin'. I guess most of 'em would keep on with the stealin'. Like I said, it's a lot easier to get money by stealin' and you get more money at one clip than if you work for it. And what else have they got to do? What is there to do when it gets dark out? You can't play ball, you can't do nothin'. What can you do? You just hang around; right? Why don't they have some parties, dances or some damn thing? Once a week they have them maybe, dances, and then they have them in a tavern. And then you go to the tavern and right there, by goin' in the tavern for the dancin', you're gonna get in trouble."

"The tavern owner knows you're a minor so he kicks you out?"

"No, he don't. You can get an I.D. card; you can get a fake I.D., I mean."

"They're easy to get, aren't they? False identification cards?"

"I wouldn't say that. Not so easy to get, but everybody's got one. And they go into the tavern and they get drunk easy and somebody gets tough or makes a pass at somebody's girl and then there's a fight and plenty of trouble."

"But it's better than going home?"

"Well, they all go home eventually. They may have some trouble with their old man or old lady if they are drunk and all messed up and they come back on the corner laughin' about it the next day. They think they got it rough at home, they think they got it hard; they should have it like me—worryin' all the time about gettin' money for my room and what I'm gonna eat and what I'm gonna wear . . ."

"Why don't you live at home?"

"I don't want to live at home. I'd rather be dead than live at home. I don't get along with my stepmother, see. When I first got out of Sheridan, I could of gone home. My dad's all right and he wanted I should come, but I said hell

no, like a fool. I didn't want to go and I actually was a fool. I should of gone home, but I couldn't go his old lady—my stepmother—and I figured I could be a big shot and live by myself and that's how I do it, but it's tough."

"But don't you miss a family?"

"Oh, once in a while I feel . . . No, I don't actually miss 'em."

"Don't you miss being able to come home at night, after work, and see your father and the kids and everybody?"

"Well, sure. Yes."

"Then how do you explain living alone?"

"Well, it's the idea; when I got out I didn't get along with my stepmother."

"Is she ashamed of you?"

"She ain't ashamed of me. It's just the idea she won't mind her own goddam business. I didn't get along with her. Do this, do that; crap like that all the while, every time she sees me. Well, she ain't runnin' me like she thinks. No."

"You had spent time at Sheridan and she didn't want you in the house. Is that it?"

"No. She wanted to take me home, awright, but she told me I was goin' to have two sets of rules; one by the institution and the other by her. And then if I worked I was to give her my pay-check and she'd give me an allowance, and she would tell me who I could hang with and who I couldn't hang with and all that. I could have got out of Sheridan before I did, only I had to accept her rules. I said the hell with that. I just told 'em that's no good, her deal about 'I got to do this' and 'I can't do that,' so I decided to spend the rest of my time, the max, at Sheridan. I didn't want nobody puttin' me on parole to no stepmother. This is strictly the s . . . ."

Now *parole* is a lovely word to a man in prison who is told that he has been granted one. Parole is one of the two

avenues—short of serving his total time, "the max.," or of dying in "stir"—by which an imprisoned man can be set free. Pardon, which is rare, is the other. Parole is the thing the cons dream about and live for, and it was all the more surprising, therefore, to hear Baseball say that he had spurned parole because of his stepmother.

A convict, man or boy, has to earn parole by good behavior and even then it is only a conditional release; he can be sent back to serve out the maximum of his sentence if he violates parole. The imprisoned man or boy who gets paroled does not like the idea of living in jeopardy of being picked up and sent back, but he leaps at the chance to get out just the same. Baseball's hatred of his stepmother was obviously deep-seated and it made me curious about his father. What manner of man could Baseball's father be?

"Did your father ever come to Sheridan and talk with you about this?"

"Sure, he was out there three times in the last three years."

"Three times in three years?"

"That's right. He told me when I got in trouble again, well, he would just disown me. But I knew if I got into trouble he would help me; he just wouldn't come out to see me. He was all right when I was in there. He wrote, as far as that goes. He gave me money if I needed it, but I didn't need it out there; I worked."

"What about the kids you run with? Have they got homes?"

"Sure, most of 'em live at home and some of 'em are married."

"Do you know of any trouble in their homes?"

"No, just the married guys. Just the married ones have trouble."

"What is their trouble?"

"I guess they are just tired of their wives."

"They're all young kids, how can they be tired of their wives? Just recently married . . ."

"I don't know about that. Some of 'em are younger than me even and they're married. I know one guy he's only eighteen and he's got two kids already."

"And he's sick of married life?"

"Yeah, he's sick. Jeez, he was so young, he didn't know what he was getting into."

"They cry on your shoulder a little bit?"

"Well, some. Yeah."

"You're kind of a leader of the pack, aren't you?"

"No, I wouldn't say that."

"You're a sort of neighborhood hero. You live alone. You had four and a half years at Sheridan. You turned them down on a parole to your stepmother . . ."

"That don't make me no big shot. Just because I served time. Every time they mention my damned name, when I'm on the street—that I've been at Sheridan—how do you think I feel? I don't feel like no king. I ain't supposed to be proud of it."

"But they're proud of it, the boys."

"No. Why should they be proud of it? It ain't them that should brag. I'm the one that served the time and it don't make no difference to them, just 'cause I served time. They don't care, the kids in the neighborhood. They actually don't care. They don't care about a goddam thing."

". . . What about the kids who were at Sheridan with you? You saw a lot of kids during your four and a half years at Sheridan."

"Yeah, sure. Lots. Movin' in and out all a time."

"Could you tell, when you were there, which ones would be back in Sheridan after they got out? Or which ones would go on to Pontiac? Could you guess which ones would

end up at Stateville and which ones would end up at the morgue? Could you tell just by looking at them?"

"No. It's hard to predict. You can't tell."

"Some of the boys from Sheridan say you can."

"No. They're full of s . . . . You can't tell. How the hell could you tell?"

"Well, some of the boys believe you can."

"No. Some of the boys that I thought had a good chance came back. Guys that got out while I was still there; back in before I did my four and a half. Violated parole or something. Some guys I thought would be back, I never heard of again after they got out. And there was a couple I thought would be all right who got killed."

"How were they killed?"

"By the police."

"Stickups?"

"Stickups and other crimes and that."

"These two boys—friends of yours?"

"Yes."

"Killed in separate cases? Not at the same time?"

"Yes. Separate."

"Robberies?"

"Yes."

"Caught in the act, is that it?"

"Yeah. They were tryin' to get out. Both of them the same."

"Did they fire at the police?"

"No. Well . . . the one guy was breaking into a place and he got caught and wouldn't stop when they said stop. Crazy bastard."

"If you were a policeman, what would you have done?"

"I don't know. I wouldn't shoot for his head or his chest or anything like that. I'd try to shoot him in the leg."

"Even if he had a gun?"

"He didn't have no gun, though."

"You said it was armed robbery and he didn't have a gun?"

"No, it wasn't no armed robbery. I tell you he was breakin' into a place."

"A burglary?"

"Yes."

"And he ran and the police killed him?"

"They shouldn't ought to of killed him. They are too quick on the trigger. He wasn't hurtin' them. They didn't have to kill him."

"A friend of yours?"

"Yes."

"And you feel bad?"

"They didn't have to kill him."

"That was one case. What about the other one?"

"Same thing."

"Killed your friend?"

"They *want* to kill kids."

"No."

"When five policemen have to shoot at one guy, a kid who is runnin', and all five of 'em hit him . . . Any one of 'em could have killed him. There must be something wrong there. Five cops shootin' at one kid. They just don't like kids, I'm tellin' you."

"Maybe they thought he had a gun."

"If he had a gun he would of shot back. They should of known that. If that was me, I'd of known they were goin' to shoot at me if I'm goin' to run. If I have a gun, I'm gonna shoot at them before I run."

"You mean it?"

"Yeah, I mean it."

"You mean you would just stay there and shoot it out?"

"If I had to. Why should I run and get shot at? You know they're gonna kill you if they can and then brag about it.

You ever see how those sonsabitches act when they kill somebody? It is like getting drunk for them. Big deal. Sure, if I had a gun, I'd shoot."

"And if you didn't have a gun?"

"If I didn't have no gun, I'd just . . . Well, hell, I'm caught. That's all there's to it. You might just as well give yourself up. You're just caught when they catch you. Who's gonna run against a gun?"

"Your friend did."

"Well, he was a dumb bastard. He didn't know no better. He was a good kid, but he just didn't know what the hell he was doin' and he ran and they killed him."

"That's quite a price to pay for burglary."

"It's part of the gamble you take. But it's a hell of a way to die. It is one hell of a way to die."

"And is there a moral to all this?"

"Moral? Yeah, I'll say there's a moral to it and lots of the kids know it: shoot first. Jeez, you know they're gonna get you. Try and take one of them with you. There's your moral, alright: shoot first."

5

The fifth boy : "Joy Ride" and Friends

PART 1

A twelve-year-old Chicago boy whose mother was a drunken slut committed an abnormal act on another boy in Thatcher Woods forest preserve west of Chicago and then crashed a rock on the boy's head, killing him, in fear that the boy would tell.

The twelve-year-old was tried for murder in Criminal Court and given a prison sentence of one to fourteen years. The Illinois Supreme Court remanded the case—People vs. Lang, 1949—on the grounds that the State had not satisfied the legal requirement that the twelve-year-old was demonstrably capable of distinguishing right from wrong. Presumably, at fourteen he would have been considered accountable, the same as an adult.

Criminal Court Judge John A. Sbarbaro conferred with the State's Attorney prior to a second trial. Could the State prove the boy could tell right from wrong? The State's At-

torney's man shook his head. Judge Sbarbaro said, "Then there is no sense in going ahead with this trial. I'm going to turn him loose."

A teenage inmate of the House of Correction laughed when he read of that disposition in the newspapers and said, "You can get away with murder."

Joseph Spencer, a Circuit Court judge in Dover, Tennessee, exploded with indignation on January 29, 1958, while a jury was being selected to try four youthful Texas jailbreakers for kidnaping and shooting a state trooper. A number of teenage girls had swarmed into the court, throwing kisses at the four defendants, battling with each other like alley cats when the Court was in recess as they vied to recover cigarette butts that their heroes were tossing away.

The teenage inmate of the House of Correction, reading a newspaper clipping of this, said, "Those young broads are crazy. They get that crazy and they will do anything for you. If I were their old man, I'd paddle them on the ass."

A gang of burglars, ranging in age from twelve to sixteen, was picked up in Aurora, Illinois, and all seven were implicated in looting homes in the city's fashionable west side. The ringleader was a boy of scarcely twelve, who studied burglary possibilities and charted assignments for each member of the gang on every job.

Justice of the Peace William H. Wate placed the boys in custody of the juvenile division of the Kane County Court on December 26, 1957, and directed that they return four days later for an escorted tour of Stateville Prison in nearby Joliet. The J.P. was commended in the press for his wisdom.

Next morning, the twelve-year-old gang leader was killed

when he smashed up a stolen car in a pre-dawn race with police at a speed of 110 miles per hour.

The teenage inmate of the House of Correction said, "Well, you see, they already had him on the burglary rap and he had to try getting away; he wasn't in no position to take a fall for that hot car."

The nation's news wires are clogged each day with recitals of juvenile crime. In most cases, the penalty does not fit the crime. Occasionally, the penalty is quite adequate.

An eighteen-year-old Chicago boy, Gerald Chatman, was picked up on December 6, 1957, and identified as the boy who assaulted eleven women. He was charged with seven counts of rape and two of robbery.

They picked him up in a darkened area between two residential buildings, where presumably he was on the prowl for another victim.

They booked him for trial in Boy's Court, where the worst he could get was one year, but the State's Attorney roared that this was not a juvenile matter and hauled Chatman before the Grand Jury, then on to trial in Criminal Court. Chatman got two sixty-year terms to be served consecutively, so novel a ruling that it made front-page news and produced editorial comment that the State was indeed able to contain a sexual savage whenever the State was so inclined.

Ten New York City boys of supposed good families formed a "Superman Confederation" under the leadership of a lad who was born in Germany and who seemed to have studied "Mein Kampf." The parents were shocked that their well-fed and presumably well-bred children would be involved in something like this.

These ten New York youngsters, in setting up their Confederation, devised a formal oath in which they vowed "To

unite and purify all the Nordic peoples . . . to restore once more the moral strength, spiritual greatness and physical perfection which make up the true Nordic. We shall be superior in all things."

They figured they would need $40,000 to get this neo-Nazi confederation operating because they intended to set up a youth camp in upstate New York. They drew up plans to rob the Kew Gardens branch of the Chase Manhattan Bank and they had rehearsals. On the critical day, January 17, 1958, two of the ten discovered that they weren't supermen and ran home. Their parents called the police.

Some of the parents complained that this was just a boyish prank. New York police found two sawed-off shotguns and a variety of switchblade knives when they rounded up the boys in their homes—the same type of weapon familiar to many of the boys who talked to a stranger. Yet it would be hard to conceive of ten poor boys who would turn their minds to an emulation of Hitler.

That same day, a nineteen-year-old Brooklyn youth, Anthony Defalco, was arrested for peddling narcotics. They found sixteen capsules of heroin in a cigarette package in his pockets. They discovered he maintained two nice apartments and had a variety of two-hundred dollar suits and a flashy car. They found some pure heroin in one of the apartments. "I live good," he said. He could afford to; he boasted of making as much as $3,000 a week selling narcotics to school children, all of whom had to steal the money somewhere to keep themselves in dope.

Brushing aside a bitter reference to the racial crises which have tormented the nation in recent years, a New York jury brought in a verdict of felonious murder, with no recommendation for mercy, against four Caucasian youths—one of them only seventeen—for the holdup killing of a delicatessen owner. Faced with death in the electric chair, one of the defendents grinned and, wishing thereby to flout the entire

jury system, sneered, "We asked them when the trial opened to put niggers on the jury and they didn't do it. Ain't that a violation of my constitutional rights?"

School authorities in Kansas City ponder a wave of violence and extortion, sickened to learn that handicapped children have been set upon without mercy; that whole and healthy children ripped the eyeglasses from a nearly blind child and then taunted him and whipped him; that young hoodlums attending Kansas City schools have waved switchblade knives under the throats of fellow students, threatening to slash or maul their vicitims if they do not make a payoff to the juvenile mob.

On January 21, 1958, a thirteen-year-old white girl was raped in a Brooklyn school basement by a young Negro boy who intercepted her as she returned to class from doing an errand for her teacher. The school principal—harassed by a Grand Jury—killed himself several days later in a plunge from the roof of his apartment building. The Grand Jury raged that there should be a policeman in each of the New York schools. A policeman was then assigned to the school where the girl was raped, and a teenage trio gave him a whipping. Officers were placed on call at the discretion of the Principal, to police Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens schools.

Commenting on this episode, the Board of Education stated that they are aware that the presence of a policeman cannot prevent violence in troubled schools, and—seemingly to pacify public opinion—that they intended to suspend the chief trouble-makers by the hundreds. The members of the Board had thus appeared to 'cope' with their responsibilities by denying them. The extent to which the Board's and Police Department's plans continue to be thwarted is evidenced by a Senate subcommittee report compiled by investigators of the Judiciary subcommittee under Sen. Hennings (D-Mo.). The report, released on April 26, 1959, indicated that juvenile

delinquency in the nation "has reached its greatest proportions" in New York City where "a critical shortage of institutional facilities" to handle hard-core delinquency cases "frees deeply emotionally disturbed children" to "roam school buildings unsupervised . . ."

A fearsome kind of perversity, threatening the reputation and freedom of a twenty-eight-year-old married man, the father of two children, was revealed on January 8, 1959, in Cook County, Illinois. Assistant State's Attorney Patrick Egan, who prosecutes sex-offender cases, called in reporters to clarify a situation which jeopardized an innocent man. The man, who had never been arrested before, was picked up on the allegation of a fifteen-year-old high school girl that he had "forced her into an auto, driven her to a lonely area, and assaulted her at knife point." The married man protested he was not guilty; though he was drunk when picked up, he vaguely remembered having given somebody a ride, and later he was identified by the girl in a line-up. The married man faced charges of kidnaping, assault with a deadly weapon, assault with intent to kill, rape, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. He almost certainly was headed for a long term in prison. He was accused of a vile crime and he had no defense. The girl inadvertently created doubt of her charges when, in giving a formal statement to detectives, she said "we" instead of "I." The detectives, curious as to why she should refer to herself as "we," finally succeeded in inducing the girl to blurt out an admission that another fifteen-year-old girl was with her, that they had asked the man to give them a ride, and finally that the man had made no improper advances during the ride. Asked why she would pin a terrible crime on an innocent man and calmly stand by as the law moved in to destroy him, she said, "I was late getting home from school and I made up that story so my mother wouldn't holler at me."

To return to New York, certain Southern Congressmen

relish the racial confusion that confronts the Number One city of the nation. Southern members of Congress ridicule their Northern colleagues, stating in pseudo-piety that the President called out the Army and federalized the Arkansas National Guard because of racial trouble at Little Rock: why not New York? Senator Herman E. Talmadge (D-Ga.) proclaimed in the Senate, with slashing irony and obvious satisfaction, that Georgia must reject the thought that Federal troops be used to "preserve order" in the Brooklyn public schools! Senator Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) snapped back that he was grateful to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia for "helping us bear our heavy burdens." And with the Senate strangely quiet, the members intent upon the explosive exchange, Javits then cracked back at Talmadge that "the hair of the people of New York would stand on end" if they knew that their school problems were being compared to the situation that prevails in the Southern schools.

Kings County Judge Samuel Leibowitz read to the grand jury a letter purportedly written by teachers at Public School 67, recounting how a mob of twenty boys and girls took over the school and attacked a teacher. The signers of the letter asserted that the teachers were obliged to teach behind locked doors.

Judge Leibowitz read another letter in which it was claimed that a gang that calls itself "The Stone Killers" planned to attack Sidney Gerschick, Assistant Principal at Public School 117, because he was attempting to crack the reign of mob rule. Members of the gang told police they did not plan to kill Gerschick, only to "break some of his bones." When Principal Gerschick suspended several members of the "Stone Killers," he got a note saying that he would "Pay, pay, pay." Fearful school authorities transferred Gerschick to another school, "to prevent violence."

In Chicago, Los Angeles, Kansas City or wherever, commit-

tees, commissions and conscientious individuals are investigating the problem of juvenile crime, seeking to find the roots of delinquency and determine what can be done about it. The children in difficulties are vaguely aware that they are the subject of adult inquiry but they regard the committees, the commissions and the interested individuals as do-gooders who are both harmless and unrealistic. Juvenile criminals will confide only in that rare individual who seems to know something about the teenage gang and teenage crime, who seems to know what is going on and doesn't preach about it, and who doesn't flinch at a raw recital of what the juvenile thinks of his world. If you do not approach a boy, fountain pen in hand and a pad of printed questions under your arm, if you do not gasp when he casually dismisses the bitter facts of a brutal crime, it is possible to learn something from the boy.

Once you reach an understanding with a teenage criminal, you can ask him, say, about the bloody details of a teenage brawl in which a seventeen-year-old was beaten to death. You can ask him what he thinks of violence in the schools, and you will get a reasonably honest reply: "I'm with the kids; them kids in them schools must have a good beef about something. They are raisin' hell and tryin' to take over the schools because they don't like the way it is now. But I will tell you this: listen, there ain't any kid gonna take over anything without some big person hasn't got enough guts to keep them from it. You wanna stop it? Then you slap 'em around good when they do somethin' bad, give 'em a beatin', keep 'em in line and you ain't gonna have no trouble. You let 'em see you're afraid, or that they can get away with somethin', there won't be no end to it."

PART 2

You can get an honest answer to a straight question if you ask a locked-up juvenile what he thinks of wrong-doing. Yet, if you probe deep enough in the recesses of his mind, you will find that he has reservations about his own judgment.

It is characteristic of juveniles in serious trouble to be exceedingly tolerant of the crimes of other young people. They have almost no sympathy, however, for somebody guilty of rape and they are frightened by teenagers involved in the use or peddling of narcotics.

Given these two exceptions, general tolerance for the misdeed of another grows in direct proportion to the severity of the young con's crime. His sympathy is particularly evident toward a boy who has been locked up as a killer. This is especially true of the members of a teenage gang because the gang is, to many of its members, the substitute for a family. Frequently they share a sense of belonging to the gang that is, under better circumstances, characteristic of familial devotion.

For these teenagers, it is not a question of emulating gangsters of the Prohibition era; the gangs of today are as far removed from Capone as they are from Kierkegaard. It is more likely a case of close identification with a boy in trouble: this time it is You, and next time it may be Me. Even if I do not become personally involved, as a member of the gang I share the difficulties in which You find yourself.

Teenage gangs, in contrast to those of former generations, no longer confine their membership within religious or racial lines. Perhaps the reason for this lies in the vast intermingling that has occurred among the people of this nation during the past fifty years. The melting process has produced neighborhoods, like the stockyards and steel-mill areas of Chicago, where peoples of many origins have settled to be

near their work—just as it has produced ethnic variety in socially and economically better neighborhoods among all kinds of people who have been successful in commerce, the professions and the arts. There are experts who say that teenage gangs come into being predominantly in the poorer neighborhoods as a social necessity, but the point is that the gangs you hear about are neighborhood gangs, in contradistinction to ethnic groups dedicated to the preservation of their own kind of law and order in their own particular areas.

You will find some exclusively racial gangs in cities like Chicago and New York; groups of Negro boys or Puerto Ricans or Mexicans, where a boy of different origin would automatically be excluded from membership. But again, this is a neighborhood situation and the existence of a Negro gang in Chicago does not imply that its members will be tolerant of all other Negro gangs, for this is not true. The Chicago police, in recent years, have had to untangle near-riots of rival Puerto Rican gangs when one group got careless or bold and invaded another's domain. This challenge of preserving territorial rights is the basic concern of all teenage gangs—the musical, *West Side Story*, does not exaggerate this point—and is as true of all-white gangs in the lower income neighborhoods where pride in gang membership is part of the average boy's social scheme. If you are white, it doesn't matter what foreign land your people came from; what matters is that you live in the particular neighborhood and willingly use a knife or club or shotgun to drive out an invader.

National exclusiveness that was once the rule no longer prevails. You do not find gangs in which the first requirement is that you be Irish or Lithuanian, German or Italian. And even in neighborhoods where one race predominates, there are no courtesies extended to outsiders of that same national background who invade the neighborhood to pick up girls or look for fights. A neighborhood gang comprised of Irish, Polish, German and Italian boys might engage in vicious con-

flict with a gang from a nearby neighborhood that is constituted, from the point of view of parental origin, in exactly the same way. Of course, the passage of time has largely contributed to this shift in the criteria of "acceptance."

Invasion of a foreign neighborhood is considered *prima-facie* evidence of aggression, and retaliation will be vicious and quick. If there is minor conflict in a neutral neighborhood, with one teenager getting whipped by one or more members of a rival gang, the boys associated with the defeated gladiator will quickly assemble for an attack in rival gang territory.

The cause of the original incident is not important; it could very well be that the teenager got a whipping for getting fresh with a girl; this is a serious matter, but the girl's virtue is not the issue. The important thing is the honor of the gang. It is vital to the very existence of a gang that the rivals be taught that if they harm one they risk getting a beating from all.

The existence of wolf packs in Chicago is not new—the University of Chicago Press published a book on the subject as early as 1927—but the gangs now have mobility, using their own jalopies or stolen cars, and they have a viciousness that is far more fearsome than the isolated acts that took place thirty years ago. More than that, the gang of today is, in its hostility to society, eagerly scouting for trouble; its members are armed and ready for attack.

In his annual "Report on Chicago Crime," Virgil W. Peterson, operating director of the Chicago Crime Commission, said, on May 30th, 1957: "Typical of present day youthful gangs that have caused so much trouble in Chicago were those observed by Chicago Crime Commission investigators while conducting a survey of the 25th (Fillmore) District. Numerous carloads of young hoodlums were roaming this West Side area. Particularly wild and rough behavior was noted in the district. The activity on the streets was unusu-

ally heavy between midnight and four o'clock in the morning."

This is a national phenomenon, of course, but to return to Chicago statistics: the Crime Commission report cited explosions of teenage violence that required immediate police action, made mention of the fact that wolf packs congregate spontaneously when they are searching for trouble, and cited the variety of revolvers, knives and blackjacks that police uncover when they make routine traffic arrests of teenage drivers.

The Crime Commission attests that the worst conditions in Chicago prevail in the neighborhoods which have been flooded in recent years with in-migrants: poor Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and white trash. In a short period of years, hillbillies have overrun the area immediately west of the Chicago Loop, changing the character of the city's long ill-famed Skid Row. Skid Row is no longer the exclusive haven of down-at-heels men who live in an alcoholic stupor from dawn till midnight; "beat" southern women have invaded the privacy of this club for unfortunate men and it is not uncommon now for a drunken wino to be strong-armed, robbed of his money and his shoes, and sometimes beaten into the bargain by the twangy-voiced escorts of these poor white belles. Experienced policemen who looked upon Skid Row as a sort of haven for disillusioned men are sorry to see the change. It is true that upwards of one hundred staggering men are picked up on Skid Row each night only to face the judge in nearby Monroe Street police station next morning; this has always been the case. But violence now marks Skid Row and a brutality reigns there that did not exist until recent years. Even the patient people who run the Salvation Army Mission are filled with despair at the type of humanity that now stalks West Madison Street, the main drag of the Skid Row district. It is true that the hillbilly element now overruns the area. Their special appetites for tavern life,

casual couplings and boozy trouble-making inspired a veteran Monroe Street plain-clothes man to observe, "Skid Row has lost its class."

Duplicating the experience of other northern cities, Chicago has been flooded in recent years with a wave of indigent vagrants from economically depressed areas who have sloshed into living space in sub-standard neighborhoods—displacing, in many instances, the poor of the city in their crumby tenements that reek with rat manure and human urine. Seeking a place to work, willing to seize any kind of foothold, the poor white trash pour in on the industrial north. Ironically, in Chicago, the flood of undesirables is coming in at the invitation of the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, whose pronouncements that the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway will create 500,000 jobs are well-publicized throughout the southern states. The influx of new labor is not limited to the workers themselves; they have wives and children and uncles and aunts and cousins and grandparents; whole families chug into Chicago in old cars that barely manage to make the journey from back hill areas that could accurately be called "Tobacco Road."

The Illinois Central railroad is the primary means of transportation for some 2,000 Negroes who are moving into Chicago each month from Louisiana and Mississippi. These vast in-migrations are effecting radical changes in the social structure of the city and are producing a wave of police trouble that will presumably get much worse before it gets better.

The in-migrants are difficult to deal with because they are strangers and afraid. They hate the city but they have come here desperate for work. They regard the city and its police as things to be feared and fought; they are particularly mean when drunk, and Chicago policemen have discovered that a cop sent to a poorly-lit hillbilly saloon to quash trouble is a fool if he goes there alone. These people do not raise children, they breed them—and the children are then left to

their own devices to find whatever companionship and security they can. It is inevitable that many who survive to that age find both in teenage gangs.

Membership in a gang fills a spiritual hunger more than anything else. Much is written in the Sunday supplements about the characteristics of a teenage gang: the sameness of dress, the requirement of a tattoo, the necessity that a new member prove himself by committing a crime. These are superficial things; it is the comfort, the pride of being an accepted member of a group that is the important thing.

It is true that some gangs in Chicago send their members down to the sleazy "tattoo parlors" on South State Street to pick up the tattoo mark of the gang, yet in actual fact this is much too inconvenient and makes every member of the gang readily identifiable and most juveniles, if they think about it at all, would regard it as too juvenile to merit consideration, or too dangerous in the event that the gang gets involved in serious trouble.

Contrary to common belief, gang members do not consider it an honor to be arrested. A gang member builds his reputation on boldness and a steady show of physical courage. His associates may admire his disdain for the law, but he adds nothing to his own prestige or theirs when he is caught and locked up. Instead, his reputation is enhanced by his ability to avoid apprehension.

The gang member's ego suffers a crushing blow when he stands sweating in front of a judge and hears the grave news that he is going to jail. The average teenage gang member is a realist and he knows that life will be more difficult from this point on; that he has a monkey on his back, one that he can't shake off; that it will be exceedingly hard now to make the transition from the bad life to the better. He knows that his life can never be the same again.

The dull ache of hopelessness at his plight multiplies the bitterness in the mind of a boy who is locked up. And if, in

his view, the crime for which he is serving time was not important or a major crime, his hate will be all the greater.

A boy of nineteen, serving six months in Bridewell for the theft of one automobile tire, the Fifth Boy looked up petulantly as we approached his cell and said, "What do they want? They won't give me a chance; what do they want now?"

This boy had spent nine months in St. Charles for auto theft; later had been put on probation for five years after spending long months in Cook County jail awaiting trial, again for auto theft; and, on still another charge of auto theft, had been given three to five years in Sheridan.

Our recorded conversation with the Fifth Boy—they called him "Joy Ride" for obvious reasons—brought forth only one note of consolation, and this a negative one: his gang was at that moment locked up in County jail on a charge of murder and he had missed participating in the fray because he was in Bridewell on the night when the killing occurred.

Joy Ride was a slight, pleasant-looking boy, rather shy and anxious to be agreeable once he had decided to talk. He looked clean and his hair was trimmed in a boy's usual haircut and not worn in that pseudo-romantic duck-tail style. He seemed to be a second-generation boy of Slavic origin and the kind of boy who could easily be influenced by those he admired. Buried deep inside Joy Ride was an understanding that he was losing ground in his search for a better way of life.

Joy Ride's preliminary statement was usual enough: unhappy home life in the shadow of want, difficulties in school, minor problems with the police. And then, at age fifteen, serious problems.

"They got me for cars. For stealing cars."

"Why should a kid of fifteen steal a car?"

"It was the enjoyment we got out of ridin' around. I didn't

have a car of my own and a few of my buddies had cars. It was just the enjoyment of it."

"Were you going to school then?"

"Yeah, I was going to Tilden High."

"Would you take these cars to school or would you just keep them for a couple of hours or what?"

"Well, I usually kept them for awhile. At least for one night. Sometimes kept them a couple of days but not any longer than that because they were hot and it was better to change off and get another one."

"Did you change the plates?"

"Not all the time. I wouldn't change plates if I didn't keep the car very long. The ones that we did keep, well, we did change the plates on them. Usually took them off another car and put them on the one we stole. You could beat it pretty good that way."

"Was it hard to steal cars?"

"No, it's easy. I had a key. We took it out of a car in one of them parking lots."

"What good is one key?"

"Well, I tell you: all we stole were General Motors cars. You can work it out all right with one key. The key will work on every tenth car that those people make."

"You mean one key will work on every tenth car of that particular make of car?"

"No, you don't understand. The key works on every tenth car that the GM people make. All kinds of cars. Only thing is, you've got to stick to one year. If you've got a 1954 key, say, it'll only work on 1954 cars. You try it on the door and if it works on the door, it'll work on the ignition. You can get into the car and drive away like you own it."

"Where did you pick up these cars? In parking lots?"

"You have to work where they have lots of cars. Usually where they'd have a show, you know; a lot of cars in a line on a dark street. We'd go where they had a lot of cars and no

people. Like out at the Amphitheatre where they get lots of cars and nobody in the neighborhood pays attention to you."

"Did you ever steal a car and find out it didn't have any gas?"

"Well, most of them have gas in them and whenever we'd run out of gas we'd just leave the car there, you know; we didn't put any gas in it ourselves."

"Did you barrel-house the cars?"

"Oh, we did a lot of hot-rodding on some of them. Races and things."

"Weren't you afraid of getting caught?"

"No, we never thought about getting caught. When I first started stealing cars, I went for a year without being picked up. Then I got picked up and I figured that this was the first time and that I'd get off with it. They ain't supposed to send you away on the first time. But they sent me to St. Charles instead of letting me off and I still can't figure it out, you know. All the guys always said you get out of it the first time and I expected that. But they sent me to St. Charles and I never could figure that out. Why send me up the first time?"

"How long did they keep you at St. Charles?"

"I was there about nine months. I was only sixteen . . . or fifteen. I was fifteen."

"You think it did you any good?"

"Oh, it didn't do me no good out there. I got out and I started stealing cars right away."

"For pleasure?"

"Just for pleasure again. I told you it was my enjoyment."

"Did you have money?"

"You didn't need any money. I still had that key at home, you know. After I got out, I got that key again and I just used it."

"When they grabbed you the first time and sent you to St. Charles, didn't they find out about your having the key?"

"They didn't ask me about no key."

"Didn't they ask how you stole the cars?"

"No; all they asked me was why did I steal 'em and I told the judge it was my pleasure and he gave me St. Charles."

"When you got out after the nine months and you started working with the key again, did you get caught again?"

"It wasn't long after, I got picked up again. Stolen cars again and I got . . . Well, they had me in County jail and they gave me five years probation after I come to trial, 'cause I didn't get out on bond while waiting for the trial. So I got out on probation and I was picked up again thirteen days later for cars again and that time I got three to five over at Sheridan, at the Reformatory."

"What kind of boys did you find at Sheridan?"

"Oh, they are just like guys on the street, you know."

"Are they tough? Tougher than the guys on the street?"

"Well . . . They're a little tough. I wouldn't say right out that it's rough. It's just that the time is rough on them, you know. They know they got all that time to do and they don't want anybody pushing them around and that. You get along; all you got to do is mind your own business, you know, and you get along with them all right. It's just the time, the time that they sentence you; like if they give you a lot of time, it gets you and you figure: Will I ever get out? And it makes you think, makes you kind of moody maybe. Then you figure you might just as well give up if you feel you can't pull any more time, you know. That's how I was; I just gave up on cars when I got out. I stopped stealing cars. I figured, you know, it didn't pay."

"You say you stole cars just for joy rides. You sure you didn't strip them or sell them or steal them for somebody to use on a job—steal them for a fee?"

"No, I didn't get no money out of it. Just for joy ridin'. That's what made me sulky-like when I was up there, at

Sheridan. It wasn't nothin' bad, really, that I did and I did three years for that and . . . and . . . Well, it made me mad. God! Three years!"

"And there were kids at Sheridan pulling three years for doing things that were a lot worse than you had done . . . Is that how you added it up?"

"Well, yeah, a lot worse. And it didn't set good with me. But some of them were doing three to five years for things that weren't even that bad, I don't think. They had one kid that did—let's see; he had three to five, same as I did—just for stealing some pigs out there. You know, he was from this small town. Three to five years, I think, and only because he stole half a dozen pigs; something like that. There ain't any point to it. Gettin' three years for somethin' like that . . . stealin' a goddam pig! I don't see no point in that."

"You think it made the kid bitter? The one who stole the pigs?"

"Well, he didn't seem to be the kind that would care too much. He didn't seem to mind it too much. There are some like that; they can do three years in the hole—even in solitary, you know—and it will roll off of 'em. But there was lots of talk about three years for stealing pigs. You keep that up and they give you life if you steal a bull, you know."

"What about the long-term kids at Sheridan . . . They've got kids in there for murder, haven't they?"

"Yeah, they have about five of them there for murder."

"What do you think society should do with a kid when they get him for murder?"

". . . I don't know. That's a hard question. I've been thinking of it hard, because of some kids I know who were caught for a killing. In my estimation . . . Well, I just don't know. When you've got a kid for murder . . . Well, it depends a lot on the circumstances, you know. Maybe he didn't just realize what he was doing at the time. It could

have been anger. Judging by what I saw of them murderers they have at Sheridan there, that's what I'd say was the case, you know."

"They killed because they were angry?"

"Well, you don't know them kids. Most of the murderers they had out there at Sheridan, they was all mild-mannered, you know. It didn't seem . . . Well, you pitcher a murderer as being rough and coarse and all that, you know, and it wasn't like that. They was minding their own business mostly, the murderers at Sheridan, and not causing anybody any trouble. So it's kinda hard to figure them out."

". . . How old were you when you got out of Sheridan?" I asked bringing the conversation back to Joy Ride himself.

"I was about eighteen."

"And you're nineteen now?"

"Uh-huh. Just."

"So why are you locked up in Bridewell? More cars?"

"No, not cars. I told you I gave up on the cars. This time they got me . . . Well, I was drunk one night there, you know, and I had a blowout on a car and I was supposed to take this girl home—I guess I wanted to take her home—and I had to have a tire for the blowout 'cause I didn't have a spare, you know. So I went across the street to jack up a car and take a tire to put on mine and they picked me up."

"Violation of parole?"

"No, I was off parole. It was petty larceny that they charged me with. They had me there on petty larceny."

"And they gave you six months in the Bridewell?"

"I got six months, yeah. The only reason that I got that six months was, you know, because of that bad record I had over at Sheridan; being sent to the reformatory and all that. Most guys with that petty larceny get maybe a fine or else one or two months in here. The guys that was in the

Reformatory and all . . . Well, when they go in front of the judge they give 'em more time, you know. And the other guys that was never in trouble . . . They generally give 'em a break.

"Anyhow, here you are back in the pokey."

"That's how it looks."

"And what do you think your future is?"

"I don't know; it's pretty hazy right now. There ain't any place for me to go to get started, you know. Nobody wants you when they find out you have done time. They got too many guys that are clean, and they don't want no part of you on account of you got that record. Like after I got out of Sheridan, I joined the Army and I figured this would fix me up. Only it didn't. I was in that Army six months and I didn't tell them about my record at Sheridan or they wouldn'ta let me in."

"They check your prints. The Government gets your prints from Sheridan and the Army checks them out when the Army prints you."

"Well, I heard that. But I was in the Army about six months before they found out about it and gave me an 'undesirable.' They give me a criminal discharge just for having that record, you know. Now that ain't right; not after six months. It didn't set very well with me and I was just all goofed up after that happened. What do they think you are going to think?"

"How did you get along in the Army before that happened?"

"I got along all right. I liked it. I didn't goof up."

"Go AWOL or anything?"

"Well, I was AWOL there, but just one time. Most of the guys that go AWOL, they keep them there; they straighten out and they don't mess with them none. You have to go AWOL five or six times before they kick you out, you know; has to happen in rapid succession before they even think

about giving you an 'undesirable.' I liked it in the Army. They feed you good and it's clean, and the work ain't very hard and it's interesting. But mostly I wanted to stay in there so that when I got out of the Army, you know, if I was looking for a job and they asked me where I been, what I was doing before, well, I could just show them my discharge. If I'd got an honorable discharge, that probably'd be as far as they'd go. It would help get a job and clear up my record. Otherwise, it is hard to get a job, you know, when they ask you. Most of them ask for your draft classification and then you gotta show them that. If I showed them that dishonorable—and it's got it on there, you know; undesirable for being in a reformatory and all that right there—well, it don't look so good and you are cooked as soon as they ask you about it. You couldn't blame them. But I'm only nineteen; what am I supposed to do?"

"You mean, how do you spend the rest of your life? Do you have any plans?"

"I'm gonna try—when I get out of this place—to get that discharge changed. They give you so many years to write back to Washington, you know, if you think you deserve a better discharge than they gave you. I'm gonna try and get that straightened out and then try and go back into service again. That's my only chance to get a fresh start."

"And otherwise?"

"Well . . . I don't see much hope, otherwise."

"You figure there's not much hope for any of these kids? You take all those kids at Sheridan: do you think they are going to be in jails most of their lives?"

"I don't know, but . . . Let me tell you, I was surprised: after I got out of Sheridan—it was just this year—I took a drive out to Sheridan, you know, and just visited the place and I heard that three-fourths of the guys that was there when I was and got out, they were back in jail again somewhere. Most of the guys that I figured would go straight:

they're right back in jail again. I couldn't figure that out, except that they just goofed up along the way again. While I was there, they talk, you know, like that was gonna be the last time. I talked like that. But most of them just can't seem to make it. There just doesn't seem to be any way to make it."

"And when they decide they can't make it, what do they do? Pick up a gun or what?"

"Some of them do. I don't know. I guess most of them go back to the same line that they went in there for, you know."

"You mean a burglar is a burglar and a stickup man is a stickup man?"

"That's what it seems like, uh-huh. They do what they know how to do."

"Do they work in gangs or do they work alone?"

"They don't work in gangs. They'll hang with the gang and everybody might know about it, but they work alone or with only a couple of other fellas. Gangs are more social, you know."

"Are you in a gang?"

"Well . . ."

"You'd rather not say?"

"There's nothing wrong with gangs. It's just a bunch of fellas hanging out together, that's all."

"The kids you run with: are they all clean, or not?"

Joy Ride hesitated. He looked uncomfortable.

"Clean or not?"

"My buddies . . . They're in for that shotgun murder; you know, that little kid there over on the South Side."

"Your buddies?"

"Half of them was my buddies. They got picked up for that now. They are in County jail right now. They've got them all for murder. But I never heard of fourteen guys being on trial for one murder. Anyhow, it was an accident."

"You weren't there, so how can you tell? You were locked up in the Bridewell."

"It was an accident. I heard about it."

"It was a mob and they had guns."

"Yeah, it was a mob. But I don't think the shooting was intentional. What I think was: it was just they got drunk, you know, and they just wanted to put on a show like, and this one kid that had the shotgun . . . well, he just happened to pull the trigger. Just happened to do it. There wasn't no . . . In my mind, I know there wasn't no murder intent in their hearts. They didn't just go over there and just shoot a guy down in cold blood. It just happened accidental, like that."

"But they did go looking for him and they did shoot him and he did fall and he is dead—"

"Yeah, that's right. I know. But I know that they didn't go down there and plan it that way, you know."

"An accident?"

"Accidents happen, you know. You can't hold them for murder when it happened accidental, like that, can you?" There was a pause and Joy Ride did not press for an answer.

I said, "Well, this time you're clean. You were locked up here in the Bridewell."

"Yeah, they had me in here for that tire. Otherwise, I don't know . . . I was lucky, I guess. In for the tire. This is one time I was lucky. I wouldn't like gettin' mixed up in no murder. But like I say, you know—and you look it up and you'll see—it wasn't a murder, you know. You look it up and you'll see."

PART 3

Kenneth Sleboda, seventeen-year-old senior at De La Salle High School, was shot to death on the night of July 1, by Joy Ride's gang. Sleboda was cut down by one blast of a 12-gauge shotgun shortly before midnight at the intersection of 32nd and Morgan, out north of the stockyards.

The gang that killed him had roared up in three cars and roared away about one minute later. But there were witnesses who knew members of the murder gang and, before the night was out, they were telling police all they knew.

The Sleboda boy was dead when the first squad cars reached the scene; Kenneth was shot to death on a Friday night, just a few blocks from his home. A teen-age killing was a bad mark for the Deering Station, the 19th Police District, and Captain Thomas McLaughlin rushed to headquarters at 35th and Lowe—a half block down the street from where the present Mayor of Chicago lives with his wife and seven children—to wrap up the case as quickly as he could.

Lieutenant Edward O'Malley, in charge of the four-to-midnight watch, had the investigation well under way when the Captain got there. He had a key witness, a boy who had been on the corner, sitting on the curbing with Sleboda, when the three cars wheeled up and skidded to a stop in front of them.

"It happened so quick, we didn't have a chance," the boy said, still white and shaken by the violence he had seen.

He told how the rival gang had piled out of their cars, shouting curses and obscenities, and swinging clubs and bars of all descriptions.

"One guy came at me with a big wrench," the boy said, "and I put my arms up to protect my head and he slammed

the wrench into my side. Then I heard two sounds, like firecrackers, and I looked up and saw Kenny swaying and then he fell."

A dozen squad cars were working the South Side, rounding up the gang. Throughout the early morning hours of July 2, a stream of tight-lipped teen-age boys filed into "19," as a city fireman on watch in a captain's chair in the firehouse next door shook his head in thoughtful wonderment.

One of the boys put the finger on Clement Macis, a fourteen-year-old. "Cookie had the shotgun," the boy said. "It was Cookie that killed him."

Captain McLaughlin and Lieutenant O'Malley went into a small room for a talk with Cookie Macis. "You fired the shotgun?" the Captain asked.

Cookie nodded. "It was an accident," he said.

McLaughlin looked at the boy. "Where did you get the gun?"

"It was my old man's."

McLaughlin turned to his lieutenant and said he wanted a pickup on the kid's old man.

A short time later, a squad came in with thirty-seven-year-old Stanley Macis, and McLaughlin took him into a room. "What do you know about this?"

The father of the fourteen-year-old who had admitted the killing said he didn't know much. "I knew the gun was gone and I waited for Cookie to come home. He came home at 12:30, less than an hour after the shooting, but he didn't tell me anything about the shooting."

"What did you say to him?"

"I asked him why he took the shotgun."

"What did he say?"

"He said, 'I wanted to go rabbit hunting.' "

"He wanted to go rabbit hunting at midnight?"

"That's what he said. I asked him where the gun was and he said he hid it in a warehouse, and then he went to bed. Then the police came for him."

Captain McLaughlin asked the father if his boy had ever been in trouble before.

"Lots of times, for stealing cars."

"What did you do about it?"

"Nothing. What can you do? He won't tell us anything. My wife, Anna, she tries to control him but he just ignores her. He won't even listen and he won't tell us anything."

The Captain went back to talk with Cookie. "You said it was an accident. Tell me about it."

"There ain't nothing to tell," Cookie said. "I stuck the shotgun out the window and it went off. Sleboda fell down with blood all over his chest. Then everybody ran back to the cars and we got away fast."

He seemed totally impassive.

Out in the squad room of "19" later, as other members of the gang were taken into the private offices and questioned, Macis calmly repeated his story to reporters.

A reporter said, "Don't you feel any remorse?"

The boy looked at the reporter and said nothing.

One of the reporters, looking out a window into 35th Street, saw a parade of teenagers and went out to talk to them. "What do you want?" the reporter asked. "What are you hanging around here for?"

"We want to know what's happening," one of the kids said. And another boy said, more firmly: "We want to know who killed Kenny."

The reporter said, "Did you ever hear of the curfew?"

The kids smiled derisively: "What's a curfew?" one of them said and they drifted slowly away.

There was no other movement in the neighborhood; it was three A.M., less than four hours after the murder.

Looking south into Lowe Avenue, the reporter saw a

cigarette tumbling end over end midway in the block, smashing out a spray of sparks as it hit the street, and the reporter knew it had been flipped by a plain-clothes man in a squad car in front of the Mayor's house. The reporter went back into the station.

Lieutenant O'Malley was giving all the reporters a fill-in on the night's developments.

"The boy smuggled the shotgun out of his home after dark, last night," the Lieutenant said. "He met two other members of the gang in a vacant lot at 35th and Parnell and they talked about 'plans for the evening.' "

"That a quote, Lieutenant?" a reporter said.

"That's a quote. 'Plans for the evening.' They stole a car, a Lincoln, from 51st and the Lake; the Macis boy stole the car. And they went to a hardware store and got a box of shells for the shotgun. Then they went to meet the rest of the gang."

"Where did they meet the rest of the gang?"

"In a field at 37th and Lithuanica. All fourteen of them were there. They talked and one of them test-fired the gun. They had the shotgun, a .22 caliber rifle, a sledge hammer, some Stilson wrenches and some baseball bats. Then they piled into three cars: the Lincoln, an Olds that was owned by a boy named O'Brien, and a Ford that belonged to the folks of one of the kids."

"And then?"

"Well, then they went looking for the Sleboda gang. And you know the rest."

"How many in the gang?"

"Fourteen," the Lieutenant said.

"And how many have you got?"

"We've got all fourteen," the Lieutenant said. "As far as we're concerned, it's murder for all of them although the State's Attorney will have to decide that."

One day later, the Coroner's Jury returned a verdict of

murder against all fourteen, as they sat glumly on a long bench in an inquest room at County Morgue.

The boys were seemingly bored by the recital of the particulars; they used their hands occasionally to mask their faces from news cameramen. They looked up when a nineteen-year-old companion of Kenneth Sleboda was sworn in and asked to identify members of the gang who killed his friend. The witness was nervous. He said he couldn't identify anybody. The Coroner said something that hardly needed to be said, "Son, I think you're scared."

Then the father of Kenneth Sleboda, Bruno, stood up and cried out: "What has happened to our city? My God, why do they murder a kid?"

The Coroner turned his eyes away and hastily sipped some water.

Kenneth Sleboda's father was crying now and in the quiet of the room his soft, heavy sobs were like a drum beat. "My boy . . ." he said. "My boy was murdered like a gangster in the street."

A teenage observer in the front row looked at the father and said, "Aw, shut up."

A fifteen-year-old girl was called to the stand, a pert blonde who was filled out in exaggeration of her years. She admitted matter-of-factly that she was the girl friend of one of the fourteen boys, seventeen-year-old Eugene (Inky) O'Brien. The girl said the fight really started over her.

"I used to hang out at a chili parlor named Chick's, at 32nd and Morgan," she said. "Kenny and his boys hung out there. But I quit hanging out there at Chick's because they didn't know how to treat a girl. They didn't care what they said about me."

She said that was in May. On the night of June 6th, she said, her new boy friend, Eugene (Inky) O'Brien, was

slugged at a carnival and she knew that there would be trouble.

Inky's brother, eighteen-year-old Robert O'Brien, looked at a reporter. "I'm ashamed to face old man Sleboda," Robert said. "We weren't looking for Sleboda; we were looking for a boy named Fox."

They kept all fourteen boys on the bench while the Coroner's man typed out the verdict for the six-man jury to sign: Recommendation, that the fourteen be bound over to the grand jury for murder.

Some of the mothers of the fourteen defendants were indignant when the grand jury quickly returned the indictments. The reactions were not all the same.

One mother said: "For myself, I can take it. But for the other children in my family . . . Why should they have to suffer?"

One mother said: "My husband is a good man and I thought we had done wonderful with our boy. It was only a prank."

One mother said: "Our hearts are breaking. I've done nothing but cry and pray."

One mother said: "Who do they think they are, they can try these boys for murder? Why must some people judge other people? They are not God! Who do they think they are? God?"

Somebody asked Clement (Cookie) Macis how he felt, facing trial for murder. Cookie smiled, and said, "I'm pretty young, you know, for the electric chair."

And next day they buried Kenneth Sleboda with a Requiem Mass in St. Mary's of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, a half block from where he was slain. And as Cookie and his thirteen pals spent their first day in County jail, Sleboda was lowered into a grave in consecrated ground in Resurrection cemetery.

PART 4

Seven months in Cook County Jail broke the unity of the gang that killed Kenneth Sleboda. With fourteen boys indicted for murder, there was a long delay before trial, directly attributable to the efforts of defense counsel to quash the indictments. Defections in the solid front inevitably resulted from this delay.

The defense attorneys drove the Criminal Court to the point of exasperation with a continual flow of motions asking special consideration for particular members of the gang. And although the Court consistently rejected all arguments to kill the indictments, the frequent hearings served to establish degrees of guilt among the fourteen and opened the gate for agreements with the State's Attorney.

The State needed witnesses and it was clear to some of the defense counsel that cooperation was the easiest way out.

As the trial opened, early in February, it was announced that nine boys, instead of fourteen, would be tried for murder. Five boys had been persuaded by the attorneys to turn State's evidence and presumably were ready to help the State establish that the killing of Sleboda was a matter of premeditation and not an accidental thing, as the defense was certain to maintain. The five who defected would be tried separately.

There was to be a jury trial and it appeared at the outset that it would be impossible to select a jury. A prospective juror may not serve if he disqualifies himself as prejudiced in any degree. A prospective juror may be rejected by defense counsel or by the State. In all, with fourteen defendants, 520 jurors could be rejected in the selection of twelve good

men and true to hear the case against Clement Macis and the eight others.

In seven court days, only four prospects were accepted.

The presiding judge, Thomas E. Kluczynski, was sizzling but kept his tongue. The two Assistant State's Attorneys who were prosecuting were obviously frustrated; it did not appear that the case could be started, much less concluded.

At the end of the seventh day, the Judge had excused fifty-six prospective jurors, the defense had turned down seventy-seven and the prosecution had rejected fifty; a total of one hundred and eighty-three persons.

Then—possibly in fear that a jury, if impaneled, might throw the book at all nine defendants—attorneys for eight of the nine boys accepted an offer from the State's Attorney to plead guilty to involuntary manslaughter.

Clement Macis, fifteen, now was left alone to stand trial for murder. His attorney, a public defender, decided that Cookie stood a better chance with the judge than he would with a jury and he waived the jury trial.

Judge Kluczynski was a former jurist in the Family Court and he had seen Cookie Macis and several of the other boys before.

He knew sixteen-year-old Thomas Bracken, one of the five boys who turned State's evidence. His worth to the State was dubious. Bracken testified that Robert and Eugene O'Brien actually organized the attack on Sleboda. Bracken said they enlisted the help of many boys. "They asked them to come down and fight because Eugene got beat up," he testified.

Bracken proved of help to Macis. He said that he saw the shotgun on the floor of the car in which he, Macis and several other boys were riding. But he testified that Macis told him he intended to fire the gun in the air to "scare the guys we was going to fight."

Giving credence to Macis' story that the gun went off by accident when the car jerked, Bracken testified that the boy driving the car got out before the car had stopped and that he, Bracken, didn't know whether the car was stopped or moving when the shotgun discharged. The State's witness had interjected a reasonable doubt of benefit to the defendant.

Another of the five boys who had agreed to testify against Macis was never called to the stand: nineteen-year-old Jack Maher.

During a period when Macis was being held in a lockup on the seventh floor of the Criminal Courts building, in an adjunct of Judge Kluczynski's court, Maher decided to go visit Macis.

He said he had to go to the washroom and a bailiff escorted him. Inside, Maher closed the door, kicked off his shoes, boosted himself out a small window and let himself down to a five-inch ledge that tilted downward.

Clinging to the indentations of the building, seven stories over the cement steps that lead to the main entrance of the Criminal Court, Maher slowly worked his way along the ledge. He had to travel about forty feet on the narrow ledge, risking a plunge to his death at every step, before he got to the open windows which looked in on the lockup.

He climbed in a window and stood in a passageway alongside the cells, a startling vision to young Macis. Young Maher, the boy who made a deal to testify for the State, was heard to say to Macis: "Don't you worry about a thing, Cookie. Don't you worry about a thing."

An outraged lockup keeper, spotting Maher, roared, "What are you doing in there?"

And the nineteen-year-old who had played human fly collapsed, gibbering.

As the trial resumed, testimony became sharp and clear.

Lawrence Degnan, seventeen, testified that Robert O'Brien solicited his help for the fight "to get the guys who got my brother." Degnan told of the rendezvous in the playing field at ten P.M. on the fatal night, of piling into the cars and of how he himself gave a seventeen-year-old member of the gang a hammer to use in the battle.

As the cars approached 32nd and Morgan, Degnan testified, they spotted some boys and some girls on the corner and he said that Eugene (Inky) O'Brien hollered, "This is it!"

"We all piled out of the cars and everybody was fighting and I heard a shot fired from the Lincoln and we all jumped back into the cars and drove off."

Another participant, eighteen-year-old Raymond Kennedy, testified that he went to the fight in the Lincoln, with a .22 caliber rifle across his lap. Kennedy said, "We knew where we were going and we knew what we were going to do."

He was seated next to Macis in the car. He said he heard the shotgun go off and he saw the weapon in Macis' hands. Kennedy had quite clearly implied that Cookie had control of the weapon and fired deliberately, and a murmur went through the courtroom.

Three companions of the slain Sleboda testified that the gang jumped out of the three cars, beat them with blunt objects, and kicked them. One boy said he was beaten with a sledge hammer.

The girls who had been on the corner said that Sleboda was shot within ten seconds after the three cars had pulled in at the curb.

They saw a boy get kicked in the face and they saw him run; then they heard the shotgun go off and they saw Sleboda grab his stomach and slump against a signboard. They saw him wobble and fall.

Kenneth Sleboda's father testified that he picked up his boy that night at 9:00 P.M. at the Silvercup Bakery, 5324 Federal Street, where Kenneth had a night job. The boy went out for a little while, the father said. The next time he picked him up was about 10:30. The boy lay dead on the sidewalk at the corner of 32nd and Morgan.

Clement Macis was the only witness for the defense.

He was brief, and the State did not pursue his allegations of innocence.

He testified that he was holding the shotgun that killed Kenneth Sleboda but that the gun was discharged when the car gave a jerk. He said the gun was pointed out the window.

He said he did not know Sleboda and did not intend to kill him. He said he did not know that Sleboda had been hit until a long time after he and his gang had left the scene.

The State didn't bother to ask him why he thought the gang piled into the cars and pulled out moments after the shooting.

The public defender, John Flaherty, did what he could with virtually no case. "Macis only meant to scare, not to kill. The hand of fate was put on Kenneth Sleboda to place him in the line of fire."

Assistant State's Attorney Herbert Barsy said, "The plan and design of this offense was to avenge the beating of Eugene O'Brien. Macis is old beyond his years and he helped to plan the incident and helped incite the other defendants."

Cookie did not seem much interested.

Judge Kluczynski found Clement Macis guilty of murder.

The Judge said, snapping out his verdict: "In the opinion of this Court, there was premeditation and announced purpose before this tragedy. The evidence shows this defend-

ant took an active part in planning the raid and bought shells to put into the shotgun.

"This was a malicious act, performed with malice aforethought. This defendant is palpably guilty as charged in the indictment."

The public defender timidly mentioned the possibility of a new trial. The Judge shook him off with his hands and told the boy to stand and listen.

"I don't know how much you are impressed with what has been going on, nor its impact on you. I don't know whether you think you have become a big shot because of the publicity. But you are going to the penitentiary on a charge of murder."

The Judge said he had listened attentively to both sides and was satisfied that Macis had committed the crime "with reckless abandon and with a malignant heart."

He pronounced sentence of sixteen years. Cookie smiled, faintly.

With utter quiet prevailing in the courtroom, Judge Kluczynski waved a finger at the boy and said: "You are going to be marked as a murderer and I don't think that is anything to gloat about. You will spend three hundred and sixty-five days of each year and twenty-four hours of each day in prison and there will not be a second when you are not watched. There will be an eye and a guard on you at all times, and if you think that is funny, you are wrong.

"The Court knows what it is doing to you. I know from the evidence, at the time you did it, you intended to do it."

The boy stood motionless and without expression as the Judge lectured on.

Mrs. Elizabeth Sleboda, mother of the boy killed, burst into tears. Bruno Sleboda, the father, was not satisfied with the severity of the sentence but he said: "If that is the law of the State, we will have to live with it."

Judge Kluczynski, aware that he would be criticized for

not pouring it on, told Cookie Macis that the Court was sure the punishment would have been greater if the family of Kenneth Sleboda had sat in judgment of the killing. In bitter tones, the Judge denounced the public for shifting the weight of the trial onto a court; he was referring, of course, to the reluctance of the public to accept jury duty.

Well aware that Cookie Macis would be eligible to request parole after serving five years and four months of his sentence, one-third of the sixteen years, or that he could win automatic freedom after serving the maximum of ten years and eight months (two-thirds, with one-third of his time remitted for good behavior), Judge Kluczynski anticipated a protest from the public that he had let the boy off with an easy sentence.

He denounced the venire men who used "every possible excuse and subterfuge to avoid jury service; who openly told the court 'they would not be a party' to making a verdict or a disposition of a case where teenagers were involved."

Judge Kluczynski was obviously seeking to restrain himself as he said, "The lethargy of the citizenry of Cook County is unbelievable. Everyone connected with this case worked days and nights and holidays. We tried for a week and could not get a jury. It is disheartening to see so many people deliberately refuse to serve. Those who refused to serve will be the first to criticize."

Chicago newspapers gave editorial support to Judge Kluczynski's measure of justice, possibly because of the care he took in disposing of the thirteen other defendants.

Out of his own files from Family Court, the Judge had the police, school and behavior records before him as he passed sentence on the others.

Eugene (Inky) O'Brien, seventeen, got four to fourteen years. The Judge pointed to testimony that he used a lug

wrench in the fatal fight and that when one of the boys with Kenneth Sleboda had been knocked down, Inky kicked him in the face.

Robert O'Brien, eighteen, got one to ten years. He was the organizer of the revenge attack.

Raymond Hillock, seventeen, got one to six years. He was one of the first to sign up for the raid and helped Cookie Macis steal the Lincoln car.

John Peck, eighteen, got one to six years. Kicked out of Harper High School as a truant and incorrigible, Peck did not live in the Macis' gang neighborhood but participated in the battle, the Judge said, "just because he likes to fight."

Ronald Fuhri, seventeen, an orphan, got one to six years. The Judge said he was on probation as a car thief.

Donald Lewis, seventeen, got one to five years. The Court recalled testimony that Lewis used a baseball bat as a weapon in the raid in which Kenneth Sleboda was killed.

John Bartlett, nineteen, got one to five years and there was no comment from the bench to decorate the sentence.

John Sarna, nineteen, likewise got one to five years. Sarna, a cousin of the O'Brien brothers, was home on furlough from the Chanute Air Force base in southern Illinois. He had arrived in Chicago just twenty minutes prior to the departure of the gang for 32nd and Morgan, and seemed to have knowledge of the battle plan; he went on the raid without bothering to go home.

Shaking his head at the eight who pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter, Judge Kluczynski fingered the records on the bench and said, "There is a pattern here. Their records show truancy, bad marks and bad school records in general. They were all given many chances. The home background is responsible for a lot of this. Their parents were told of the situation and the parents made no effort to discipline them."

Judge Kluczynski took one sweeping look at the defendants, pushed back his chair, stepped off the bench and went to his chambers.

One of the eight defendants was heard to say, "Well, I guess that's it, ain't it. I guess that takes care of it."

Not quite, it didn't. There were still five others to be dealt with; the five who pleaded innocent as witnesses for the State.

The verdict was the same in each case. Five years probation, the first three months to be served in the House of Correction, the city jail of Chicago.

The prosecutors almost apologized to the Court for the deal that had been made. "The State has no sympathy for any of the five," Assistant State's Attorney Nicholas Comerford said. "We selected these five to testify for the State because we felt they were the least culpable of the fourteen." The prosecutors did not mention that these five were the ones who were *willing* to testify for the State.

Two of the five got a verbal lashing from the Court: Lawrence Degnan, seventeen, and Raymond Kennedy, eighteen, both of whom had key roles in the attack that ended in death for Kenneth Sleboda.

Judge Kluczynski said, "In view of your juvenile records and your participation in this murder, I don't feel you are entitled to probation. But the State has made a promise and must keep it. With one exception, you five fit the pattern that pinpoints Juvenile Delinquency: truancy, incorrigibility, lack of family discipline, lack of respect for the rights of others.

"You, Degnan: giving you probation is just another delay in your trip to the penitentiary. You're proud to beat the rap once again and that goes for you, too, Bracken."

The one boy in five who evoked sympathy from the Court was nineteen-year-old John Maher, the human fly.

The Court said, "I feel that you, and you alone, are en-

titled to probation. You have no record. You don't belong with this kind of gang. I urge you to seek good companions, to go to church and to stay out of trouble. And above all, don't let these gangs use you."

The trial was over.

In County jail, where Cookie Macis and the nine others would be held pending preparation of the letter that would go with them to State penal authorities, Cookie and his boys gathered to talk it all over; they were due to serve time but they were still a gang.

In the bull pen of the Criminal Court, where they waited for transfer to the House of Correction, the five who got five years probation also had a chance to confer.

Four of the five gathered at one end of a cell, whispering among themselves. Over in a corner, seated on a stool and all alone—seemingly ostracized—one boy with head down, fingers moving nervously through his curly, carrot-colored hair: John Maher, the human fly, branded untouchable because he was the one boy in fourteen of a killer gang for whom a judge had spoken a kind word.

6

The sixth boy : "Boot Straps"

There is a regal quality to a man who can make something good and valuable from virtually nothing and wear it—a tangible thing or an attitude—with grace and dignity and confidence. And to find an unwanted, abused boy make something of his life, directly by the power of his will, is a warm, satisfying thing. The sixth was such a boy. In tribute to his courage in pulling himself out of a deep rut of delinquency, those who knew him referred to him as "Boot Straps."

Boot Straps was a tall, handsome Negro. He had the fine body of a good middleweight fighter, and his movements had suppleness and grace. He was poorly educated, with an arresting talent for inventing ways to say things. He made no excuses for the trouble he had caused, and he had a disarming way of smiling when he mentioned things he had done which now seemed to him ludicrous.

Boot Straps had objective sympathy for the problems of

others and a casual way of commenting on the moral frailty he had observed in the people he had met in his nineteen years. He had the special ability of his race to recognize the failings of other humans without moralizing about them.

The boy was born in the gutter of poverty. He lived his early years in the smelly tenement area of the South Side where the mark of a successful man is not a well-appointed home—good carpets on the floor and nice furnishings are almost unheard of out there—but a dashing wardrobe and a late-model car. Home to Boot Straps, as to many thousands of his people, was a place where you slept and had something to eat if, indeed, you had the "something." Boot Straps' recollection is that, as a growing boy, he never had enough to eat; he was always hungry. His boyhood dream was not that he would be a well-dressed, influential man one day, driving a big car with the self-satisfaction of knowing that people were turning to look at him; no, his boyhood dream was that he would live one day in a place loaded with food and that he would have money in his pocket to buy more.

As a child, Boot Straps saw many things, things that were criminal and depraved. He saw precious little that was right and decent. When you grow up in the slums, as he did, you don't have much interest in the apparently academic question of right and wrong. The same as everywhere else, the important thing is to adjust your financial affairs in such a way that you have more money coming in than you put out. But unlike "everywhere else," that adjustment is the sum total of existence in the slums. So long as you don't get caught stealing enough to give you a favorable balance, few questions will be asked as to where you got what you have. Boot Straps can remember that the agent of the tenement landlord was not particular where the rent money came from so long as you had it in hand when he knocked at your door each week. In the filthy firetraps of his neighborhood, the dope peddler and prostitute and sexual deviate

were not regarded as outcasts. Neither were thieves nor men who changed "wives" as frequently as other men change their socks. As Boot Straps remembers it, the people who had the hard time were those who tried to "play it on the square," to work for what they got, people who tried to be decent and honest. As he remembers it, almost all the people in his neighborhood tried to play it on the square, but they fell short, somehow, of making ends meet—a poor advertisement, in his view, for the virtues of an honest life.

Delinquency for Boot Straps was thieving. It was an essential; it solved the problem of holes in the soles of his shoes and it gave him the money to get food for his stomach. He was one more Negro youngster who had never been exposed to kindness and who saw examples all around him that, if a person really needed something, the thing to do was to fetch it yourself in whatever way you could. What he needed was food to satisfy the hunger of a thriving young body; getting enough to eat was an obsession with Boot Straps. His ache for food was the predominant factor in his life. His body was bursting to produce muscle tissue and strong bones and blood, and the body made no allowance in its demands for the fact that Boot Straps was poor. Hunger made a thief.

Another kind of hunger, a spiritual craving, if you will, forced Boot Straps to change his life. His reformation might have been achieved without a terrible struggle if he had searched for someone to lean upon. He did not even try to seek help. He was like a man with a compulsive taste for liquor who cannot or will not bring himself to ask someone for guidance but who tries, instead, to help himself. Boot Straps, like the drunk, was caught in the tentacles of a fearsome thing and tried, without help, to fight his way free. The remarkable thing is that he won the fight. He weighed the matter of right and wrong in his own private way, facing

the bitterness that crime as he knew it did not pay and, by pressures of his own, he altered his life.

"It surprise people who knowed me," he said. "It were like findin' plums growin' on a shaggy old poplar tree. They say, 'Hey, boy, you try and fool somebody by gettin' a job?' But I knowed that you can't make it all of your life, stealin'. And I told myself, 'Boy, you gonna play it on the square if you starve to death.' "

Boot Straps admitted that as a boy he would steal anything not directly in the shadow of a uniformed cop. He got away with it for the first dozen years of his life.

"I was first in trouble when I was twelve; real trouble, I mean. I was arrested for breakin' into a school and I were released on probation. Another boy and I, that were."

"Why did you do it? Only twelve. Did you break into the school to wreck it? Did you hate schools?"

"No. No, we didn't break into it to wreck it. Broke into it 'cause we needed clothin' and wanted some food. It were awful to be so hungry. I mean, we lived in a foster home and the foster mother she turn us out and told us not to come back that evening or any other evening, and so we got hungry and were all alone and we knew they had a lunch room in the school so we broke in to get some food out of it."

There are people who open their homes to the unwanted children, feeding them and bathing them and guiding them through that lonesome period when unwanted children are in extreme need of love and protection. And there are people who do it only for the meager stipend the community is willing to pay them for a roof and a bed and a warm meal for an unwanted child. Generous souls who are willing to treat a strange child as their own are only rarely found, and in the course of talking with boys who had been in trouble, I discovered that they had a low opin-

ion of the foster home system. Even so, possibly because to lose the boy meant that you also lost the stipend, it was rare for a foster parent to send a boy packing. I suspected that Boot Straps had not come clean on this.

"Why did the foster mother kick you out? It's funny she would just kick you out. Only twelve."

"Well, I don't know . . . Well, we were sorta hard to get along with, you know, roughnecks, and that. She was done with us. It were too much for her, puttin' up with us, you know."

"So they gave you probation and then you got in trouble again?"

"Yes. The next time was the following year. I were thirteen."

"And what was it this time?"

"The same thing. I broke into a school . . . I broke into lots of schools." Boot Straps smiled, "I got a habit of breakin' into schools, I guess."

"Why schools? Was it easy?"

"I mean, it is easy and I knew I wasn't going to get caught. Only I did get caught."

"How did you get caught?"

"Well, that second time, we were up the stairs and in the rooms, ransackin' the desks. We were going through the desks, lookin' for money—different funds that the children have, that the teachers have raise with a beg and haven't turned into the main office yet. Well, the janitor come in and maybe he found out where we broke in and he tracked us down to one room and all of a sudden the lights came on and he had us. We run for an exit that we had staked out, but we run for the wrong one and it was locked and he had us."

"So?"

"They took us down to the police station and then they sent us to the Juvenile Home, and I stayed in the Juvenile

Home for three month. I guess that was punishment or something, or maybe they didn't know what to do with me. But it were time they made me do, that three months, and then they release me."

"What was it like at the Juvenile Home?"

"Well . . . they got all kinds of kids in there. They got homosexuals and everything; all kinds, from—how do they say it?—all walks of life. I mean, there are kids who don't know what a homosexual is, but they find out; and other kids been in trouble, I mean, three, four years. You can learn anything you want to learn; they will learn you the easy way, different things. The easy way to commit crimes and how to get away with it. That is the main thing of just about anybody who is lock up, he is figuring out how to do it when he get out and not get caught again. That is just about all we talked about in those three months: figure out another way how we could break in schools and not get caught."

"Did you ever figure on breaking into something else besides a school?"

"No. Nothin' else popped into our minds. It were our way, the schools. We could get food and money and maybe some clothing and it was these we wanted. Oh, we tried breakin' into cars and things like that; we learned about them jumpers, the tinfoil on the ignition, at Juvenile Home. A group would come in for stealin' cars and takin' stuff out of them and they would tell us different things, you know."

"Yes?"

"Well, it works that way when you are in there. We explain what we were in for and they tell us what they in Juvenile for."

"Do all the boys who are locked up tell all the other boys?"

"Well, they tell us where we can make different contacts on the outside and things like that. They tell us who

the people are, in case we get any goods or stuff like that that we can't get rid of. They tell us how to get rid of it."

"Fences?"

"That's right. They tell us about fences."

"Are there a lot of fences that a kid of twelve or thirteen can depend upon?"

"Yes."

"You ever hear of a fence named Fagin?"

"No, I don't rightly recall. I used to know a lot of places where I could get rid of the goods, but since I been trying to go on the straight and narrow, I have broke contact and I have forgot most of 'em. I try to throw most of it out of my mind. It don't help you if you keep thinkin' about it; it is a temptation, you know."

"What about pawn shops? Did you take stuff to pawn shops?"

"Oh, yes, we went to pawn shops. Tailors' shops. Everything."

"Well, now, the pawn shop man . . . Does he know that the stuff you've got is hot?"

"Oh, yes, he knows it is hot because, I mean, just a bunch of kids . . . I mean, that is, kids come in a place like that with goods, expensive suits, fur coats, stuff like that . . . Man, he just knows the stuff is hot. Like when we got these Telechron clocks out of the schools: well, they know those clocks are institution clocks, for office use, you know, used in big buildin's. The man know that the only way kids get some clocks like these is to break in some place to get 'em. Because, I mean, they ain't got kids out to sell them. We wouldn't be just on the street, sellin' clocks for a big company like this Telechron; the man know that."

"Don't the pawn shop people question the kids? Don't they ask where the kid got his clock?"

"Oh, no. They pretend they don't know it is stolen, in case something comes up in the future."

"And do they give you a pretty good price for a good clock?"

Boot Straps flashed a wan smile. "No. It is usually very low, the price. On anything that a kid has. Like, say, one night we had a $100 suit. We only got about eleven bucks out of it."

"You sure it was a $100 suit?"

"We knew it was a $100 suit because the price tag were on it. Brand-new, never been wore."

"Well, you knew it was worth more than eleven bucks. You knew you were being cheated."

"That's right. It were a gyp, we knew. But what you going to do? This lady seem to be stallin' for time and we thought maybe she was callin' the police; sometimes they do that. So we just left with the money she give us, the eleven bucks, and she said come back again some time." Reminiscing, his voice trailed off.

"Were you ever in St. Charles or Sheridan or any place like that?"

"I was in St. Charles twice. When I was thirteen and again when I was fourteen. I had my fourteenth birthday in St. Charles and it was one of the best times of my life." Boot Straps smiled a big, toothy grin.

"You mean they gave you a cake?"

"Yeah, a cake. They were very nice about it. I mean, they gather all the fellows that have birthdays on that same day and they open up a big mess hall and we have a big birthday party. I never knowed anything like that in my whole life and even if I were locked up, it were wonderful."

"Why did they send you to St. Charles?"

"Well, the first time . . . Well, I didn't have no other place to go."

"You're not telling me they sent you to St. Charles for nothing are you?"

"No. I was a problem man. I'd been in Montefiore and

Parental School—Parental, you know, when you're too bad for Montefiore—and different places like that and they didn't want me back at these places because I was kind of a bad customer and I had outgrown the age. Mostly, I had outgrown the age."

"They have lots of bad customers in Parental School?"

"Lot of them. Some that belong in Sheridan and different places like Joliet. I mean, some of them are bad, real bad, and belong with men, not with the kids. I mean, the offenses they have done."

"Like what?"

"Like, say, for instance, rape and stuff like that. Crimes of that sort. You shouldn't get Parental School on rape. I mean, they should be put away like grown people because they done what they done with the intention a grown person would have. The reason they don't get Sheridan or Joliet is on account of their age. But it is a grown-people crime and they should suffer a grown people penalty for it."

The law does provide, although Boot Straps did not seem aware of it, that a boy must pay a "grown people" penalty for a "grown people" crime. At least theoretically, a boy is not eligible for Parental School if found guilty of a major crime. The Chicago Board of Education is trapped by a legal device into accepting boys under sixteen years of age who have committed grave crimes; the major charge is dropped to a minor charge at the discretion of the State and the court is then free to assign the boy not to a reformatory or prison, where he possibly belongs, but to Parental School. A charge of assault to commit rape, for example, might be translated by the State to disorderly conduct, possibly because the charge of rape cannot be proved or perhaps for some extenuating reason. The Board of Education is persistently at odds with the Family Court over this procedure of watering down the charge and has tried, with some suc-

cess, to put a limit on the number of cases that the court will assign to Parental School. The Board of Education has two serious objections to the court practice of reducing the charge: the Board does not have the facilities to accommodate the great number of incorrigible boys that the courts would like to send to Parental School; and Parental School, established to provide disciplined education for youthful troublemakers of the worst sort, is nonetheless a school, not a reformatory, and the Board of Education resents being forced to take in boys who should be sent to St. Charles or to Sheridan. It is no exaggeration to say, as Boot Straps said, that a great number of boys who were guilty of "grown-people" crimes are sent to Parental School. The influx of exceedingly bad boys is a disruptive and dangerous perversion of its purpose.

"When you were at Parental, were you afraid of the boys who were in there for rape and things like that?"

Boot Straps smiled confidently. "No, sir; I wasn't afraid of nobody."

"Were you as bad as they were?"

"Well, there was lots worse than me at Parental. I mean the things that they done and were in there for were lots worse than what I done and what I was in there for. I didn't like that idea of shippin' me off to St. Charles. I were a problem at Parental, though, and I cause a lot of trouble and I guess I don't blame 'em much for gettin' me out of there and sendin' me to St. Charles."

"Well, tell me about the kids at St. Charles. Are they smarter than those at the Juvenile Home? Or Parental? Are they rougher?"

"Yeah, they are rougher in this manner: because they is in St. Charles and know they're not going to receive any rough treatment, I mean, like the hose and stuff like that. They have this new superintendent and he's all for con-

trol, like using psychology and stuff like that on them, you know. No rough treatment to worry about. Only this psychology."

"You mean, they used to whip the boys and they don't do this now?"

"They used to have a hole and use hoses, fire hoses. They can turn a fire hose on you and knock you all over the place and almost rip your head off and knock the guts out of you with a fire hose. So this new man come in with his administration and he moved all this out. He thought, maybe, you know, he could do it all with psychology."

The superintendent at St. Charles at this time was Amos E. Reed, who has since taken employment in another state. He disputed the charge of this boy that there was little discipline at the institution. Mr. Reed said it was true that they did not beat up the boys and that they preferred to take what he called "the parental approach." Although St. Charles was once widely known for severe physical treatment of boys in custody there, Mr. Reed said he believed "you can't beat discipline into a boy." Superintendent Reed maintained that his staff did quite well with moderate discipline. He conceded, however, that as one unit of the several institutions under the direction of the Illinois Youth Commission, it was easy enough to dispose of a bad actor: you merely transferred him to Sheridan which is more like a prison and less inclined to try handling a recalcitrant with gentleness.

Mr. Reed had no comment when I asked him why many of the boys who talked to a stranger said they would prefer to serve time in the tough prison discipline of Sheridan rather than in the relaxed cottage life of St. Charles. It is a tenet of penology that men in custody have a need for discipline and prefer to serve time in a place that is tightly run, provided only that the discipline is fair and that the

warden and his staff do not play favorites in any way. The best run institutions are those where the rule is hard, where the warden and his staff know every man in the place and yet avoid personal feelings toward any of them. The convict of whatever age has no hope for favorable treatment but he can endure his existence if he is treated fairly.

Boot Straps quite obviously had not been impressed with Mr. Reed's "psychology" and I now asked him about it.

"Do you think he made a mistake, the Superintendent at St. Charles who tried out that psychology? Which is the better way to do it: beat the kids or be nice to them?"

Boot Straps was not sure. "I wouldn't like to say he'd get further beatin' them—although maybe he would, at that. I'd say he should use less of that psychology stuff and give out with a little more discipline. Like military discipline; somethin' like that."

"Are you saying they have it too easy at St. Charles?"

"That's right. They livin' the life of Riley. I know 'cause I was one of the toughest, not meaning to boast or anything. I was one of the toughest that went through there. I knew that nobody would lay a hand on me. They had more trouble out of me than anyone else."

"You knew nothing would happen to you?"

"I knew they wouldn't use no strenuous methods. Only psychology."

"What did you do out there to cause trouble?"

"Well, lots of ways. Say, for instance, I get involved in a argument with some of the administration people and I don't like the way things goin' or somethin'. I'd just organize a group of boys and we'd just about wreck the place or tear it up or something like that. If they brought some different people out there, like new house fathers or something like that, and they wanted to change the way we were doing things . . . Well, we just wouldn't change. We try to make

them go away. We'd jump on 'em and throw shoes at 'em and maybe start a fire, things like that. It work on about ninety-nine out of one hundred times."

"With you as the ringleader?"

"That's right. Me."

"And how would you get this gang of kids together? Did you threaten them or clout them if they wouldn't put in with you?"

"No. I didn't have to threaten or clout 'em. I mean, most of them was there for a long time and they'd been used to the house parents lettin' 'em do anything they wanted to do. They would hell it up with you to keep it that way."

"What way?"

"Well, you could do almost anything you wanted to do. They had homosexuals right there in the barracks with the other kids, and some kids they'd sneak off and go over the fence and, well, everything. They would go to town and sneak women back and . . . Well, I don't think it was too good. I think it was too lenient when I was out there. The people who run the place knew about the homos, f'rinstance, and they didn't do nothing about it. If a kid complain that some other kid, a queer, is all the time after him, the people out there just say, 'Well, you try to stay away from that fellow and you be all right.' Now this ain't no way to have law and order in a place like that."

Superintendent Amos Reed freely acknowledged that the problem of homosexuality is a grave one and that he was powerless to do anything about it at St. Charles. Mr. Reed said, "We must accept homosexuals if they are sent us by the Youth Commission. We try to segregate them from boys who are not contaminated. The difficulty is that we do not have a place where we *can* segregate them." He also confirmed Boot Straps' charges of boys going over the fence at will. However, Mr. Reed said that, while it was quite easy

for a boy to walk away, the number of escapees was, in fact, negligible.

As for boys' sneaking women into the cottages at St. Charles, Mr. Reed said this allegation was ridiculous. When questioned about this later, Boot Straps said, "Mr. Reed, he a nice man and he do the best he can. But it really happen about them women, like I say."

"The first time they sent you to St. Charles, it was because you were incorrigible. Is that right?"

"I guess I were."

"Why did they send you back?"

"Well . . . It were arson. The second time, I went back for arson. We were a bunch of boys and these boys and I were plannin' to break into a school and we went to this school and, with all the windows locked, we had to break out a windowpane. I punched it out. I had a pair of motorcycle gloves and I took and broke the window out, broke the windowpane out. That put me in it for the arson. You see?"

"I see."

"All right. I went in, *we* went in through the windowpane where it were broke out; picked all the loose glass from around it and crawled in through the window and went into the office part of the school. All right. We look around the office and there wasn't anything in the office so I decide I would go home. I said I was goin' home 'cause there ain't anything in the office; I said this school is no good, it's no money in here and so I'm goin' home. That takes me out of the arson that happen later, except it really don't. You see?"

"Yes."

"All right. The rest of the fellows said they wanted to stay there and go through the rest of the school and I go off and leave them in the school. And so about two hours later, the fellow that's livin' with me in the foster home, he come

home and say, 'Holy God, they had one big fire at the school and about fourteen fire engines had to come around and put the fire out.' And I ask him why it happen and how it happen; I didn't believe him at first about the big fire, because he was used to tellin' tales like that. But he say it were so. He told me that the kids started it, that they was goin' through the school with torches and stuff like that and lookin' in the different desks, and that one of 'em dropped a torch in one of the closets where they kept kerosene and stuff like that."

"You mean they dropped the torch in there on purpose?"

"Yeah, I think it was on purpose. Just for the thrill of it. It was on purpose because they could easy put out a little torch fire; they only had little paper torches, that's what they said."

"And how did they trace this to you?"

"Well, at school they arrested this fellow who lived with me at the foster home because he had a pocketful of school door keys right on him. He told the policeman who all were with him and how I broke in the windowpane with the motorcycle gloves and consequently they picked us up and since I was older, even though I wasn't in on the torching at the school and didn't participate in the fire . . . Well, I had been at St. Charles before and they sent me back to St. Charles."

"And how long were you back at St. Charles this time?"

"I stayed in St. Charles the second time about eleven months."

"And was it still easy to pull time there?"

"Yeah, I found it was very easy. I mean, I was in less trouble that time; I had matured more; I knew what I had to do to get along with people and it is very easy to get along if you have a mind to. I mean, you meet 'em half way and you can get along. They even give me a easy job, like door boy. It is kind of important, door boy. All I had to do

was sit down and keep the other kids from runnin' in and out, and keep kids from runnin' away. And they pay me five cents a hour for this."

"Did you figure that was good pay?"

"Well, I wouldn't call it good pay. It's just somethin' so you have a lump sum when you leave there, St. Charles. You need money when you leave. 'Course, it was pretty good pay for what I was doin'." Boot Straps smiled again in pleasant memory. "All I'd do is set there and listen at the baseball game, maybe read the comic magazines, stuff like that. And it put something in my mind, you know."

"According to you, what is in the minds of most boys at St. Charles? Do you think it is true that most boys at St. Charles plan for future crimes, as some of them say?"

"Well . . . I'd say that some of 'em think mostly about future jobs, the ones, mostly, who don't have no home or any place to go to. It's all they had to do was sit around and plan jobs and plan stuff like that, you know."

"How carefully would they plan?"

"Well, they would plan good, I think. I mean, they'd get together, a bunch of them, and they would plan very good. Say, for instance, a bunch of 'em were getting out at the same time. Well, they'd sit down and plan a job almost as perfect as an expert . . . criminal would, I mean. I mean, they would take the job every step of the way, like they say: pickin' out the spot, how you move in, how you cover the front and rear, how you get away when you get the money."

"And did they know the gamble? Did they know what was at stake so far as they themselves were concerned?"

"Yes. They have to figure first of all that maybe some policeman will have the gun on them and they don't know it and they will be shot dead without getting to fire a shot. They've got to figure coming back to some place if they get caught. St. Charles. Sheridan. Pontiac. And how much time."

"And what kind of jobs did they plan? Burglary?"

"Well, they plan mostly burglary. They plan jobs like breakin' in the warehouses and stuff like that; stealin', say, a bunch of typewriters and things that can be sold quick, stuff like that. Out of warehouses."

"And when did they graduate to stickups?"

"Well, they would talk a lot at St. Charles, but mostly, I would say, the stickups are in Sheridan. I never came in contact with no real good stickups at St. Charles. Only burglars and strong-arm fellows."

"And they think it pays?"

"No, but everybody who try that stuff like to think it pay. Were it you or somebody else legitimate out there at St. Charles, well, *you* know it don't pay and the ones out there, *they* know it don't pay too. I would say most of the fellows out there plan to go straight when they leave. Most of 'em, if you give 'em an even chance, they would go straight. And most of them set there, dreamin' kind of, of a legit job and goin' straight."

"And most of them, let me say *lots* of them, do not go straight when they get out."

"This is true. I tell you when they get out the elements are so strenuous, the kid say: 'what have I got to lose?' The kid is hungry and nobody makes him no place to go and the kid say: 'if I steal, I'll still be outdoors and nobody want me; and if I *don't* steal, I still be outdoors and nobody want me.' So they go on and they steal again and get sent back to St. Charles or Sheridan or someplace, if they don't get shot, and the kid he knows that this will be and he don't care nothin' about it. He got so much time before he die and this is how he die, in and out." We looked at each other a long moment.

"I wonder about their parents," I said.

"They ain't really got any parents and that is the real difference. Their parents are usually drunk or if they got

a mother she is hustlin' or something like that and she is of no value to them, like a real mother. The parents maybe are dead, or if they're not dead, they don't care nothin' about them; they either left them, the kids, with some foster people or somethin' like that. Or they got fed up with feedin' them and puttin' clothin' on them and the cost and the worry and all, and they just cast them out."

"What about *your* parents?"

"My parents both dead. I never knew my father and I never knew my mother and I think it would of be easy for me if I had knowed them. The way it is, I am all right; I am clean now and I know that you know I am clean. But it is my own idea I have decided that you can't make it with strong-arm or bustin' into schools and like that. Give me my mother and my father and it would of be easy."

"You had a time, though."

"Yes."

". . . You said you didn't know your parents?"

"My parents died when I was three and a half years old. I was raised by an aunt. For nine years, she kept me and then she was plannin' on marrying and I stood in the way and so, consequently, I had to go. She was going to marry a very well-off fellow, I mean he was very wealthy and what you call a big man, and he didn't want a ready-made family, said he would make his own. So he told her, my aunt, that I would have to go, and so she turned me over to my sister."

"How old was your sister?"

"My sister is twenty-eight years old, my sister. But then, when they cast me out and give me to her, she were only twenty or maybe twenty-one year old. She love me, but she didn't like it very well 'cause she got no place for me. I mean, I stayed with her approximately one year, but she didn't have no place for me, really to stay, and so she go down to the Juvenile Home and explain and told them she

didn't have no place for me to stay and ask them won't they please send me someplace, put me in a foster home or somethin'. So they sent me to Parental School."

"And they sent you to a lot of other places?"

"That's about right. A lot of other places."

"That way you got to know a lot of policemen."

"Policemen? I didn't have no contact with policemen, without bein' arrested. I don't know *no* policemen, without the ones who picked me up."

"What kind of a time did you have with those policemen?"

"Oh, it were not bad. They will slap you maybe a little and cuss you. But mostly they don't knock you around, like sometimes you hear. They don't do that. They don't do that without they got some good reason. I've never been knocked around by a policeman, except when I were arrested and they were trying to get something on me. Clearups, you know."

"Clearups?"

"Clear up the book on all one kinda crime what been done in the district."

"Like what?"

"Like schools. I were not the only one breakin' into schools. But when they get you and you know they have got you, well . . ."

"Yes?"

"Well, it is nice for them if you sign the paper and say it were you who done 'em all. There is a score kept on all of this and it make them look good if they get a good clearup. It is the same with any kind of crime. They tell you it don't make no difference, because you will go to trial on this one they got you for, and they holler and slap you around a bit so's you will confess to everything. I have heard that they would beat you good and make you say you done it all but that is not the fashion anymore. The kids are smarter and

they know, the kids, that no cop can beat 'em without he gets in trouble and the kid tells the State's Attorney that the cop beat him. The State's Attorney don't give a damn about the kid, anymore than the cop, but he not wanting to have the kid sound off in front of a judge. The cop know this too and I guess he figure it isn't worth it to beat a kid. So mostly, because the cop now know that the kid is smart, they only threaten."

"This you can take? The threatening?"

Boot Straps chuckled. "Well, it were better than a real beating. I never got a beating. I have heard of beatings, but not any more I don't hear about it. They slap you around, stuff like that. Slap you hard on the face, but they never beat you up with the hose and stuff like that. I have seen this here hose; it is only a chunk of hose a couple feet long and they claim they can whip you and it won't show no black and blue, like maybe a baseball bat will. But with me, it were only slap and threaten."

"I am not sure what you mean by threaten."

"Oh, they wave that red hose at you and they threaten to take you down in the basement. When you get picked up and they throw you in a squad car, they are scared just like you are. And then they get you to the station and they are puffing out and telling everyone how hard it were to get you in . . ."

"Yes?"

"Well, they get you in a room and they threaten to take you down in the basement and use the hose on you. I mean, it is like psychology. I mean, they trying to get you to confess to things that you done and things that maybe you have not done. They know you done somethin' and they figure they put the pressure on you strong enough, eventually you say you done everything. You confess everything. See?"

"Does it work? Threatening?"

"Well, on some of 'em it work. On an experienced crime committer, it don't work."

"Does it work on you?"

"It could work; yeah. It could work, I mean. But I mean it never did work. I'd say they'd have to be very convincin' for it to work."

"But you have a feeling that on some boys it works?"

"Yeah, on some it work . . . It is this psychology that you hear about. The policemen, they don't give a damn, not really. When they are done hollerin' at you and tellin' you what they goin' to do if you don't confess everything . . . Well, they will generally give you cigarettes and buy you things to eat out of their own pocket. I have think about this a lot of times and I have felt that maybe the policemen are kindly to you, really, on account they have seen so much. It were too much for me to figure, you know, but I have seen it, this sympathize. It were like there must be some reason for the sympathize. But I do not know this reason."

"You have known a lot of boys in trouble?"

"Yes."

"What do you think about the future of all this? What about all these kids in trouble? Thousands of them locked up and many more thousands of them running around, white, colored, oriental, everything . . ."

"That is hard. The future? Without a boy were very lucky, like something clicking into place in his head and telling him that there got to be some better way . . ."

"Yes?"

"Well, he either grow up and try to get into boxin' or somethin' like that . . . Or if he can't make it into boxin' on account of he just don't have anything, then he probably grow up and be a thug, rob banks, stuff like that. Guys see other fellas with lots of things, money and that, and it

were kind of a pain within 'em to get a little of it for yourself. They eventually grows up, the kids, but all that wantin' things builds up in a person's mind and without somethin' very drastic happen to 'em, they don't have it in 'em to change their course. You need somebody to change your course, it hard to do by yourself; but if they don't have anyone to stand with 'em and back 'em and point the way, like the preacher say, you will go from worse to bad. No kid who has serve time can shake it loose, without someone is there to back him. You just do somethin' more bad the next time and again the next time and you can't find no ending to it without the kid is got himself killed somehow or has got 199 years and then they have got him in there forever. *A kid is lock up ain't got nuthin'. How you expect a kid to produce somethin' good from nuthin'?* No, mostly he wind up like I say."

"And who do you figure should back him?"

"I figure, if most of 'em could have a home to go to where people would treat 'em, you know, kind of like a real mother and father would . . . Well, I figure they eventually go straight. But nobody want you. Nobody want you for a job or nobody want to take you in."

"And so we shouldn't be surprised if the kid who's rejected picks up a gun?"

"No, 'cause they figure there is no other way open."

"Do you know a lot of stickup men?"

"I know a few . . . They don't start out on stickup; it is other things. And then stickup. A kid who has done time for robbin' candy stores, he figure that don't pay. You get caught and maybe they throw time at you like it were some place important that you stick up."

"So they take a chance on something bigger?"

"That's right. They figure they can rob a bank just as easy as they can rob a candy store. Figuring out the angles and

things, it can be done that way and I know it can be done. If you get away with it, you got something; not like a candy store. If you don't get away with it . . . Well, what do you lose?"

"Maybe you lose your life."

"They figure everything. They figure: what have I got to lose? I ain't got nuthin', and what have I got to lose if I go on and rob this bank? They figure: if I go on and rob this bank, I probably be shot at, but likely I get away."

"It is all clear in their minds when they go into the bank?"

"Yes . . . It scare them bad. It are only a few minutes in the bank, but it seem like a long time, a long time. There were one fella told me when he grab the money it were like glue, so hard it were to get into the bag. How you know that you got everybody in this bank in front of the guns? How you know maybe somebody hit the alarm with a knee or his foot, and then The Law is crowdin' in on you, maybe waitin' to cut you down with shotgun when you come out the door? A guy who did a bank tell me it were like all his life, jes' standin' there in front all them people with a .45, watchin' the big clock in the bank that look like it were dead, the hands on that clock movin' so slow and like smashin' him in the head every time it move on one second . . . The fella who rob a bank or something like that, he say: I probably be shot at, but maybe I get away; if I don't get away, I just don't get away. That what he say. But there are lots of fear in it, and the day come when you don't get away. And without you get this straight in your head before that day, you have risk it all and lost it all and maybe it is better you never be born."

"You claim you gave it up. It shouldn't concern you now."

Boot Straps shook his head helplessly. Then he said, "I know a lot of boy and what they do and how nobody try to

help them and I have sympathize for them. There are terrible trouble waitin' for them and I have sympathize on account there are nobody willing to help them. You don't know it but I know it and it are a terrible thing, when you think about it."

7

The seventh boy : "One-Arm"

There is a special kind of isolation about a criminal, young or old, who is physically deformed. The handicap militates against his getting honest work, and his buddies don't want him with them on a burglary or holdup because he is too conspicuous.

A young criminal who has served time feels that his record has separated him from the people he would call "legitimate." The young criminal who has served time and further suffered a physical mark to accompany his record feels intensely that he is confined to a narrow, naked trap. And if the deformity came from the careless operation of a machine in the place where he served time, the boy will have worked up a bitterness hard as lava and equally insoluble.

The Seventh Boy, who was twenty when we talked with him, had pulled three years at Sheridan for burglary and lost an arm, right up to socket, while working in the laundry there.

In illicit experience he was rich beyond his years when, at

fifteen, they had shipped him to Sheridan. At that age he had been earning $100 a week as a sheet writer in a Chicago bookie joint. And his cut had been much more than that as a member of a big-operation burglary gang that had a working arrangement with the most notorious fence in the nation.

"One-Arm" was a tall, athletic boy with sandy hair and an inquisitive look in his gray-green eyes, a well-coordinated boy with not an excess pound of weight. His body was hard and his mind was hard. Not well educated, he had a rough and ready knowledge of the world and having his arm ripped away had salted the tragedy of his existence. He would look at the empty sleeve of his shirt as if hoping to discover that, by some miracle, he had been made whole.

There has been increasing attention in recent years to the "softness" of American life and its injurious effects on the young. Shane McCarthy, director of President Eisenhower's Council on Youth Fitness, declared to reporters in Washington on May 2, 1958 that the United States was getting "closer to the brink of a national disaster" because this has become "a nation of pushbuttons and gadgets." His estimate clearly does not apply to the juvenile criminals; they are, for the most part, physically well-conditioned boys. The Ivy League son of a banker might be troubled by obesity and constipation, but the reformatory boy is usually lean as a fox and filled with appetite for many things aside from soft living.

One-Arm was never a candidate for the Ivy League. He was an honor student in burglary. One-Arm belonged to the company of experts who can pick up the trail of a bejeweled couple as they leave a fine restaurant and tail them to their home, who can bide their time as they wait for the propitious moment for a break-in, who can set the stage with phone calls to the home to make sure the coast is clear, who can enter an apartment house unobserved and case-knife the apartment door (using a slice of hard plastic inside the

frame of the door to spring the lock). One-Arm belonged with people who knew and could sense the value of the things that can be found in a luxurious home and who have good contacts for disposing of their loot.

One-Arm secretly was fascinated by the Syndicate, the all-powerful symbol of organized crime. His ambition, I think, was one day to make a connection with the Syndicate.

Chicago area people living in the city where the Al Capone gang originated Syndicate crime, have heard so much about it across the years that they regard even Federal pronouncements on the subject as a kind of fiction. U. S. Attorney Robert Tieken, for example, created little attention with his disclosure, on April 23, 1958, that his investigators in the Northern District of Illinois had compiled a "corporation chart" of the Syndicate. Tieken's chart placed the well-known Syndicate figure and Capone alumnus Anthony J. (Tough Tony) Accardo, in office as chairman of the vast holding company. Paul (The Waiter) Ricca, another elder statesman of the old Capone gang, was listed as second in command. In point of fact, there is reason to believe—if only because of the fantastic amounts of money that he has acquired with no effort—that Ricca, whose real name is De Lucia, is the boss. The operations of the Syndicate are so vast, it could well be that neither Accardo nor Ricca is the dictator and that, instead, some person of social, legal or financial prominence and respectability is actually in charge.

There is no question but that the Syndicate, with excellent legal and financial advice, has established a tremendous empire in the fields of handbooks, the policy racket, slot and pinball machines, dice, roulette and vice. The Syndicate is equipped to serve its membership as a "fence"; it is not beyond the realm of probability, for example, that the $300,000 take of Greenlease ransom money that disappeared in the sensational Kansas City, Missouri, kidnap-killing of a

few years ago was picked up at a discount by the East St. Louis, Illinois, division of the Syndicate and spread across the nation. Who else would have sufficient cash on hand to purchase that amount of hot money on brief notice, and who else would have nation-wide enterprises through which the hot money could be filtered into circulation?

Whatever question there might be as to how the Syndicate is organized, there can be no question about the extent of its operations. The Syndicate is firmly in business in Las Vegas, even operating its own money-delivery system with armored cars. The Syndicate operates crude clip joints and strip-tease houses in Cicero, at the western edge of Chicago, and in Calumet City, at the southern end of Cook County. The Syndicate has powerful control of certain labor organizations, it runs the narcotics racket, it is king of the jukebox business, it calls the tune in at least two organized sports, it buys its share of police officials and political figures, it has a tight control of the call-girl business that has replaced the old red-light districts, and it is prepared to enforce its will with arson, maiming, or murder.

Comparing a boy like One-Arm to a well-heeled member of the Syndicate is like comparing a seedy police-court lawyer to a well turned-out attorney who argues corporation law before the U. S. Supreme Court. However, the example of affluence set by the successful criminal is a basic ingredient in the admixture that keeps a young boy in crime; the priest, preacher or policeman can solemnly declare that crime does not pay, but the boys are well aware that this simply is not true. Apart from fear of assassination and an occasional qualm, top-echelon crime is quite obviously rewarding, and boys like One-Arm fill their idle time with daydreams that one day they will matriculate into the big money.

One-Arm aspired to membership in the Syndicate as a boy who goes to Mass every morning foresees his entry into

heaven. Oddly, even those who make the connection and get a small job with the Syndicate never know much about it. City, State, and Federal authorities are all baffled by the chain of command in the Syndicate. The Police Commissioner of Chicago pretends that there is no Syndicate; it is convenient to say that it does not exist, for this obviates any obligation to do something to eliminate it.

Ignoring the fact that they were discussing something that their chief, the Commissioner, said was not there, veteran Chicago policemen studied the Tieken chart on the Syndicate's chain of command and disputed the importance the Federal chart placed on certain individuals. The great strength of the Syndicate is that no outside authority has so far broken the code sufficiently to know how it is controlled or by whom; the Syndicate is quite like the Kremlin—and who, except for the few in power and always subject to periodical shifts, knows how *that* is controlled?

There is no doubt that the Syndicate has tremendous wealth. Prosperous taverns, plush night clubs and restaurants, hotels, breweries, firms that distribute name-label liquor, apartment houses, insurance companies, small-loan companies, employment agencies—there is firm evidence that the Syndicate is operating in the grand manner in all of these. There can be no doubt that the Syndicate—sometimes referred to by policemen as "The Army and Navy"—pays for and gets the best legal advice and investment counsel obtainable. Yet one can fairly assume that its key business and legal advisers could not tell you who really runs the Syndicate nor how the profits are divided.

It is known, however, that men like Accardo and Ricca live in Great Gatsby homes in upper-crust River Forest, west of Chicago. Until nosy Chicago detectives cast a cloud on the affair by sitting in squad cars nearby, the high point of the Syndicate social season was the annual summer garden party at Accardo's place. His eminence in the organization

might be judged by the fact that he once appeared at his annual Fourth of July soirée in bright yellow Bermuda shorts, with jacket to match, and none of the hoods, legal eagles, political friends or crime lawyers who showed up dared to smile! This annual garden party was regarded as a command performance, with the quasi-respectable people who worked for the Syndicate under obligation to appear in acknowledgment that they were the well-paid flunkies of the system. The suspicion always lingered, however, that the people who really run the Syndicate and the respectable people who guide the empire never exposed their identities by attending.

Accardo and Ricca are family men, as are many of the others who are credited with membership in the top echelon, and River Forest neighbors grudgingly concede that they have nice, well-behaved children. Inevitably, however, father's notoriety casts a long shadow on the children and they cannot have a normal upbringing. Even so, the children of other men who have had dealings with the Syndicate seem to be doing well for themselves, some of them winning frequent mention on the society pages by reason of a talent for riding show horses. In another generation or two, if the families are able to retain goodly amounts of money, the descendants of the Riccas and the Accardos quite possibly will work their way into white-tie, worthy-cause society—for the passing of time has had a wondrous deodorizing effect upon the bad smell of more than one family fortune in this country.

One-Arm lived in adulation of the money that big league gangsters have acquired but he was a congenital minor leaguer and, like millions of other boys who somehow could not go straight, he seemed destined to waste his life in petty crime. Not for him the chance to strut about a garden one day in yellow Bermudas, amid overly-tailored underlings who chomped on prime two-inch steaks and tucked away quantities of his best whiskey.

One-Arm's futile adventures in crime started early.

"They picked me up for burglary when I was about eight years old. We hit a candy store, a shop, you know, and I think we got $2.80 or something like that and they grabbed us and sent me away to Parental School. Yeah, I was eight. Something like that."

"Did you have folks?"

"No. I'm an orphan."

"Did you live in an orphanage before the burglary?"

"Yeah, I did. Me and two other boys decided we would run away from the orphanage and we robbed the store and got caught, and I got Parental. When I got out I was still eight years old and they put me in a private home and then I went to Juvenile. I couldn't take that private home. It was a . . . what do you call them? It was a home, a private home, where people just take you in; I don't know what they call them. They pay the people to keep you."

"And you don't think much of paying people to take care of kids?"

"No. No, I sure don't. The way I look at it, the people are getting paid to keep you and to us it don't mean a home. It's just like we're paying our own way or something. I was put on a farm once, one of the private home deals, and the people got . . . Well, I don't rightly know how much a week the people got to keep me, but besides that I had to do all the work on the farm and then they would give me fifty cents a week. Instead of it being 'home,' it was just like going to work or something with no pay. It was the same thing as being in jail. They were paying, the State was, that I should have a home life but there was no home life."

"What about your foster parents? Were they good, industrious, sober people, or what?"

"Well, I never really had any foster parents who had to see me all the way through, you know. I was in home after home; different people all the time, you know. I just didn't

get along well and there was this one guy . . . Well, there was this one guy who drank and I didn't get along with him 'cause I wet the bed and he beat me up for it every day."

"He beat you every day?"

"Every day. For wettin' the bed. I couldn't help it; it just ran out of me. I would remember to go to the bathroom before I went to bed, but all the same I would wet the bed and then he would give it to me. He beat me bad. It's not important now, I guess; I've had a lot of beatin's for one thing and another, but he beat the s—— out of me and I was just a little kid. I couldn't take no more of that so I run off, and when they got me they put me in another place. They put me in with some real old people and I couldn't get along with them either on account of it was clear they didn't want no part of me. They wouldn't have took me in, I guess, except they liked the idea of gettin' the money. But the one who drank, he was the worst."

"How long did you live with the man who drank?"

"I'd say about two years, I guess; I don't remember exactly. All I remember, if I wet the bed I couldn't go out, and he whipped me with a strap and I couldn't help wettin' the bed so I couldn't go nowheres and I just kept runnin' away and, God, when he got me back, did he give it to me."

"How old were you then?"

"Well, it was after I was eight. I was nine or ten, I guess, at the end. Yeah, I stayed there till I was about ten. I just couldn't make it and kept runnin' away all the time and so they sent me to Juvenile. That's the damnedest thing about it; they always got some other place to dump you, like you was crap or garbage or somethin'."

"I imagine you met a lot of kids who were just like yourself when you got to Juvenile. Kids with problems."

"Well, they look like problems now, but then they didn't. The kids didn't consider them problems then, you know. They were just kids, you know. They feed you all that b.s.

about all they will do for you and, if you're a kid, at first you believe it. It creeps up on you, the goddam truth of it, when everybody says everything is going to be all right now, you know, and it is never made all right."

"I don't follow you."

"Well, they get a guy or one of them social worker broads to set down with you and they tell you they will do a lot for you and, when the time comes, they never do nothin' for you. They give you this line of b.s. and they don't figure on doing anything for you and chances are that in the end they will screw you. I mean, like when I went to St. Charles. I did my time just like any other boy did. And then, when it comes time to go home and I have done my time, I don't go home. The kids that got a home, they go home. They promised when I have done my time that I go home, but I ain't got a home so I spend my time and then I don't go home. You gotta stay right there at St. Charles."

"How old were you when you went to St. Charles?"

"I think I was twelve."

"What did they send you there for? Robbery?"

"No, no, no. Just burglary. I had never done no armed robbery; I don't go for that."

"You mean it's dangerous to put the gun on somebody?"

"I don't go for no guns." The gray-green eyes were wary.

"Where's the turning point in a kid's life?" I asked. "When he transfers from burglary, breaking into a place, to picking up that gun and throwing it at somebody? What makes the difference?"

"Why ask me? That ain't my way, armed robbery."

"Do you know a lot of kids who have worked with the gun?"

". . . Yeah, I do. And, well, let me think that one good now: the difference? Well, I guess when you get older and you have been in so many times . . . Well, cops have a lot to do with it, too. I mean, like you come out and you get in

trouble and that's fine, they've got you again. But suppose you come out and you don't get in trouble? Now this sounds like an old story and nobody will believe it, but it's the truth: you come out and you fix it in your mind you ain't gonna get in no more trouble and you do try to behave yourself and they'll lay it on *you* every time something happens in the neighborhood. On *you*. It don't matter if you have kept out of trouble, they don't think nobody else did it if something happens; they think *you* did it."

"You mean, they've got to get somebody fast and . . ."

"I mean when you've got a record they are always pickin' on you. Not only me; ask any guy that's been in trouble. Something happens and those f——n' coppers figure you're the guy; after all, you are the guy they know was in jail and they figure right off that you done it again. It gets kind of tiresome after awhile. I ain't crying, but like when I come home from Sheridan after the arm—*I* ain't gonna get in no trouble; how am *I* gonna get in trouble? One arm. But they picked me up thirty-two weekends in a row. Nothing definite; just on more or less—what do they call it?—suspicion."

"Suspicion of what?"

"Of anything. Suspicion of burglary, suspicion of this or that. It's more or less how the cops get. They can aggravate you. They more or less go out on the streets to aggravate you. They don't want you in the neighborhood and they figure that's the way to get rid of you. Aggravate you. Always, always aggravate you. I know a lot of guys that went out and pulled stickups, just for that one reason, to be sent away, to get clear of 'em. They figure they're either gonna make a good score and make a lot of money, or else they're gonna get caught and they're gonna get sent away. They figure their troubles are ended both ways."

"They want to change the existing situation, the aggravation?"

"Yeah, they want to change the situation. The cops are al-

ways on them. They're on their back all the time. Even if you get a job . . . Well, if you get a job, how can you keep a job? The guy gets a job and then they pull him in and they have this rule, this law, you know: seventy-two hours they can hold you, horsing around, without booking you. I mean, they can just pick you up, right off the street, and hold you for seventy-two hours. All right, you get out and you go back and you bin away seventy-two hours and you ain't got no job. You got to start back where you left off all over again."

But there is no rule, no law, that permits the police to keep a suspect incommunicado for seventy-two hours. A suspect is required to be booked for a crime or released within a "reasonable period of time." The requirement, however, fails to state who or what determines the length of "a reasonable period." The American Civil Liberties Union is irate at the frequency with which suspects are kept in custody for extended periods, and has brought suit in Federal court in several cases on allegations that the suspect was beaten or otherwise abused during the time he was illegally held. The "rule" appears to be that law-enforcement agencies will try to get away with anything they can: who is there to complain if boys like One-Arm are locked up for *un*reasonable periods?

Holding young boys in custody for extended periods is, of course, in violation of law. The "Family Court Act" of the State of Illinois provides, for example (Section 10): "When a male child under seventeen years is arrested with or without a warrant, such child shall be taken *directly* [ital. author's] before the Court having jurisdiction." The Courts are sensitive to a suspect being held without charge, and the Chicago police are accustomed to judicial rulings that a prisoner either be booked in a brief period of time or turned loose. The police may feel that the suspect is guilty of a crime, yet they must turn him loose or face a counter-charge of unlawful arrest. It is the custom for attorneys of known criminals

to petition on writs of *habeas corpus* the moment the criminal is picked up. The writs are generally returnable in an hour or two, giving the police little time to sweat out a confession. But there is no lawyer working for boys like One-Arm and the legal rights of these boys can safely be abused, particularly when the boy is later turned loose with no charge placed against him. This practice, however, fills the boy with nausea toward the law and a bitter realization that "you get a better shake" if you have the money to hire a lawyer to protect you.

There are exceptions to all things, however, especially judicial ones, and occasionally a well-intentioned lawyer will step into a case without fee to battle for the rights of an impoverished youth. A notable case of extreme detention in which a lawyer gave his time and money to right a serious wrong involved Edward Lee (Benny) Bedwell, a hillbilly boy who was picked up on Chicago's Skid Row on suspicion that he had consorted with the murdered Grimes Sisters and that he had, in fact, ravished and murdered both of them. After several days of "sweating" in a suburban motel, Bedwell confessed the murders. A Chicago attorney, David Bradshaw, won freedom for Bedwell and exoneration of the crimes largely on the basis that Bedwell had been unlawfully detained by the Sheriff's Police.

The average boy looks in vain, however, for needed legal assistance and One-Arm did not appear to be exaggerating when he told us of being locked up for seventy-two hours at a stretch.

"How do they feed you during those seventy-two hours?"

One-Arm faked a laugh. "They feed you fancy. A nice thick slice of bologna and black coffee."

"Bread?"

"They put the bologna inside of bread. No butter, no mustard, no nothin'. Just the bologna and bread. No finger bowl."

"Do they whack you around any?"

"I could really tear into that one. That's a question I can really tear into. I've had quite a few beatin's in my lifetime, like I told you. But . . . you wanna hear this? I'll tell you; me and another boy, we got into trouble about a year and a half ago with the cops. Our car smashed up and I busted my leg and my leg was broke already; it was in a cast and the cast was below the knee and when our car smashed up, the knee busted and it blew up this big." One-Arm cupped his hand to indicate a small melon, then he continued: "Well, they grabbed us, these cops, and they took clubs and for about three hours they beat that knee. This other boy had stitches in his mouth, five of 'em, and his face was out like this." His fist was the size of an apple, and again he continued: "His face hit the dashboard when our car smashed up, see, but they beat him for three hours, too."

At the moment I heard this story, I doubted its truth. It did not seem likely that policemen in their right minds would beat an already crippled boy. And if, indeed, they did beat him, it would not seem likely that it would take them three hours to produce the confession which, One-Arm contended, was the reason for the beatings.

"They told us that we better confess, or else . . ."

"Confess what?"

"They wanted us to confess to some robbery out on Irving Park."

"Did you confess?"

"Yes, we did. Wouldn't you?" I avoided comment on the beatings.

"I take it you don't like coppers," I said.

"Well, I've been sent down a lot of times and I think I've got a lot more against coppers than anybody, because of what I lost, the arm. I know I have a grudge against them and it's pretty hard to say a good word. But there are some

coppers I have met that I have liked. And I can get along with 'em real good, some of them."

"But in general, you hate coppers?"

"I do. In general, I hate coppers."

"Why? They've got a job to do. You are trouble, so they don't like you. Why should they like you?"

"Listen: those coppers that picked us up that night when we smashed up the car and they beat us, they were so drunk you couldn't hold 'em up."

Timothy J. O'Connor, Police Commissioner of Chicago, commented on this as follows: "This boy displays the typical attitude of the criminal, regardless of age: utter contempt for the efforts of society to restrain him. If you have a drunken cop, you won't find him out on the street looking for thieves." That is essentially true but it is no departmental secret that drunken cops have been a major problem, or that a patrolman with the temporary rank of lieutenant, who candidly refers to himself as a former lush, heads up on full time a welfare agency for "problem" policemen in Chicago (he has prevailed upon upwards of seventy-five officers to join Alcoholics Anonymous). The best policemen do not drink, and a cop who drinks prior to or during his tour is a fool who engenders hatred and contempt for policemen in every civilian he breathes upon. While one could doubt One-Arm's claim that he was set upon by drunken policemen, it is quite possible that "his" cops had stopped somewhere for a drink or two.

"In general, do all the kids you know hate coppers and make them out as bad as they can?"

One-Arm nodded. "Yes. That's the way it goes. Nobody cares for them. They can be standin' right by them, I mean the coppers can, and the kids gonna start a fight with 'em. 'Cause all the time, and I mean *all* the time, they never got a good word for them, the coppers that is. Well, once in

a while there is one who maybe has a good word for the kids, but then the ones that are rotten ruin it for them guys that are any good. I have had a lot of 'em come up to me and talk decent. If a man will come up to me and say, 'Look, the Sergeant wants you should stay off the corner for awhile; people are complaining . . .' well, I can listen to this guy and I can move off the corner. But so all right, you're standing on the corner and two guys pull up in a car and they holler, 'Hey, punk, move it.' It happens. What you gonna do? And this is what happens: 'move it,' they tell you, real snotty. Well, you argue and you're in a fight with them right away. I mean they're asking for it, for trouble with you; they won't give you any room to take care of it and you have to give it right back to them. So we give it right back."

"Would you say this is the general attitude of all the boys you know who hang around the corner?"

"Well, look, Chicago is getting more crowded by the day; I suppose every big city is. Well, the kids ain't got no place to go. Is this a mystery? So they go on the corner and they stand there, and is this murder or something? I know they make a lot of noise once in a while, and they do this and they do that . . . But the fact is, they ain't got any place to go. You go to the lake, you get kicked off the lake at night. The Park police come and throw you off 'cause maybe you are trouble and *they* don't want no trouble. You have a car and you drive around, and they stop you and start searchin' the car because maybe you've got a few guys in the car. They want these young guys to booze it up? They're forcin' 'em into taverns. Some of the guys are too young to go in a tavern and ask for a drink, and that. And who wants to hang out in a tavern every night? I mean, even if you are old enough and you got a legit I.D. (legitimate identification) and all, there's no kick in sittin' around a friggin' tavern all night. So you stand on the corner because you don't want to

get drunk just because you don't like to get drunk and there is no place else to go. What happens? They throw you off the corner. What is it, we should love these fellas?"

"So you all end up hating coppers."

"So everybody ends up hating coppers."

"And some of them end up with a gun in their hands, hating coppers?"

"That's the truth of it."

"And they end up in a spot where they've got a gun in their hands and the copper's got a gun in his hand."

"Yes. That's how it happens. And I'll say one thing: I'd rather run into a grown man with a gun in his hand, than a kid with a gun in his hand. I think a kid has no sense of responsibility. Like you take this case of this kid that shot that cop in Shakespeare [Mustache]. Did you hear about that one? If that was an older man, he'd never of shot him in the stomach the way this kid did. He would a shot him in the leg or something, an older man; all he wants to do, the kid, is get out of there . . . not kill somebody like a lockup keeper. And even an older man, you know what the judge thinks when you come in with a gun? No matter if you used the gun or not, if those State's Attorney fellows put you there with a gun, the judge always figures it was attempted murder, intent to kill."

"Well, it is, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's the way anybody would look at it. It figures if you're carrying the gun, you're gonna kill the guy if he moves; that's the way it is. But it ain't worth it to get ten to fifteen years in jail for $50 on account of you have a gun."

"A lot of them do it."

"Yeah, a lot of 'em do it. I don't know . . . You don't dig me. The way I look at it: a guy that used a gun and don't know what he is doing—kids, mostly—I think they are yellow. They got the gun and they don't know how to use that

gun but they haven't got enough guts to walk in and burglarize a place without anything in their hands."

"If they burglarize a place with nothing in their hands," I said, "they figure there is nobody in there to stop them. They don't need a gun. That's burglary."

"You never know *who's* in a place. You just don't know."

"You cased those places pretty carefully before you went into them, didn't you?"

"No. Where did you get that? I just went in."

"You'd spot a house or something, a dark store . . ."

"No, I never touched a house. A store? Well, yes, if it was dark. But somebody could be sleepin' in there. It happens. I broke in three times on men sleepin'. Stepped right in on a guy's stomach once, a Chinese man. He chased me down the street with an ax for about three blocks. I never fooled with those Chinese no more." And One-Arm laughed at the memory of it.

"What were you after?"

"I was after the money. I was after stuff I never had. When I came out this last time, I don't think truthfully that I would ever have stole anymore and I ain't sayin' . . . it is hard doing time and it is better you get a job. But I couldn't get a job on account of my condition, the arm, I mean. Oh, yeah, I can get a job at seventy-five cents an hour; that ain't nothing. But I don't know what will happen. I'm with a foster family right now and they are supposed to be taking care of me and I am taking care of them. Me. What do you think of that? I'm supportin' the whole family, when I work, and . . . Well, I can't make it on seventy-five cents an hour. I just can't make it."

"So maybe you will drift back into something else?"

"I hate to think about that. I ain't any good for that anymore. Me, with one arm, I am too—how would you say it?—obvious. I'm only good to be a goddam bum. That's what I think."

"Are there any of your friends who have served time and who have then picked up the gun and made out pretty well?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I know some guys who made out real good. It takes a lot of nerve to go for something big, though, because anybody with big money will protect it."

"And these guys you speak of?"

"Well . . . Look, this is dangerous talk . . . I mean the places these guys went for, well, they involved bookie joints. Horse rooms, you know. They hit the Syndicate and that takes nerve and so, I mean, I can't really give you the facts."

"You think the Syndicate might be a little annoyed?"

One-Arm hacked out another mirthless laugh. "Well, I imagine they would be if they ever knew who it was. I mean, the guys hit 'em pretty good. One guy started a liquor store with the money and one guy bought a buildin', and . . . they got those joints for a lot of money and then they went clean. They had it. They took the big chance and they beat it, and they set themselves up and there they are on easy street, except that you never know. This is dangerous, hitting the Syndicate. They will kill you. Today or tomorrow or ten years from now, if they find out, they will kill you. That's how it is with my friend and the liquor store he bought with Syndicate money: a guy comes in for a case of canned beer one day and maybe he blows your head off. But these guys, they hit it big; you gotta give 'em credit."

"You figure they had brains, these fellows who hit the Syndicate?"

"Well, they had brains. It took a lot of planning and they had it figured and it was a tight fit, something like this. But if you ask me, nobody's got brains for doing it. I mean, all right, this time they hit the jackpot; but it don't pay off. One out of a thousand might hit the jackpot. That's about it. The

prisons are loaded with guys who missed. The prisons are loaded with the nine hundred and ninety-nine."

"But if you go to a place like Stateville or Old Joliet or Sheridan or even St. Charles, what do they talk about? They talk about how to hit the jackpot, don't they?"

"Yeah, it's true. They are chumps." He corrected himself, "We are chumps."

"Let me ask you about the stuff they get. Let me ask you this: this Three Minute Gang now. That gang intrigues me. Does that gang intrigue *you?*"

"You mean, that's pulling these clothing stores? Quick?"

"Yes. They hit a place and they get out in a hurry. They put a gadget on the front door lock and they pull the cylinder out of the lock and they know they're setting off the alarm, but they grab what they can in three minutes and they're gone. It's been happening often. Do you think that's smart?"

"They're pretty fast workers, them boys."

"Are they smart?"

"Well, they've got the time figured . . . How long it takes a squad to get there. And they know what they're going after . . ."

"But are they smart?"

"No. It *looks* good. It looks good, but one slip and they're out. Maybe one slip and they're dead. It's a bad deal."

"Well, they've gotten away with a lot of stuff, haven't they? The story is they get fifteen, twenty, twenty-five thousand dollars worth of stuff in one hit. Three minutes! That's not bad for three minutes."

"Well, yeah, they get a hundred, hundred and fifty suits maybe. But it's better to break in some other way and take your time."

"Let me ask you this, if I were a member of that gang, one of three members of the gang, and we got a hundred and

fifty suits . . . say I get fifty suits for my share, what do I do with them? How do I get rid of them?"

"You fence them."

"Is it hard to find a fence?"

"No. Not if you're in that business. You can find a fence."

"How do you find a fence?"

One-Arm gave another tight laugh. "That's a good one. I never thought about it: I just grew up knowin'. I've never had to go out and look for one. I mean, I *knew*."

"Will a fence give you a pretty good price?"

"A third."

"A third of what?"

"A third of whatever the value is of the thing you stole."

"In other words, if you get a $100 suit, the wholesale price might be $60 and you'd get $20?"

"That's right, a third. You can make better money than that on jewelry. The only thing you make any decent money on is jewelry. That seems to go the highest."

"You mean watches and rings?"

"Good jewelry. Not this cheap stuff. *Good* jewelry!"

"What about furs?"

"Furs? You can't even give them away. They won't even touch furs. Not the guys I know."

"Somebody is stealing a lot of furs. Mink, sable . . ."

"Yeah, I noticed, but I don't know where they're going. I keep readin' in the paper every day about them taking furs, but I don't know where they're going. The guys I know would be throwin' them in the ash can. We had no takers for furs; no fence that I knew. You've got to cut them things up, the fences, you know; cut them all up and re-do 'em and by the time they get through cuttin' 'em up and havin' 'em put back together again, they're in the fur business and they are losing money. Oh, you can buy furs from a good fence, but *he* don't want no furs and this I am positive of."

"What about suits? Do they want suits?"

"Oh, sure, suits go like wildfire. Look what Fish was doing. He had a regular legitimate racket going. Why, Fish could go out and buy a bunch of suits like anybody else and peddle them to chumps who figured they were hot; sell 'em to the chumps for more than they'd have to pay in a regular store."

"Fish Johnson? Are you talking about Fish Johnson?"

Yes, One-Arm was talking about Fish Johnson, Arthur Johnson, a convicted fence of impressive achievement. Sometimes—as Federal prosecutors pointed out in his 1954 trial on charges that he was caught in possession of goods stolen from interstate shipments—he spelled his name with a "t." But less routine than the varied spellings of his name were the tentacles that spread out from his place of business to all parts of the nation, and the tremendous quantities of merchandise that disappeared while in transit from one state to another and that wound up in his warehouse. It was characteristic of the free-spending, luxury-loving Fish that he acquired almost exclusively labeled merchandise of high quality.

"You knew about Johnson's big warehouse out on Milwaukee Avenue?"

"Yes. That's where we had our dealings with him. He was big, all right, and I've seen many a cop catch a payoff there, too. Many a cop. They all knew what was going on; they *had* to know what was going on. And nobody bothered Fish."

With the exception of the one time they really caught him with the goods, it was true—as One-Arm said—that Fish Johnson lived a charmed life. Occasionally he was in some slight legal difficulty when he had been caught with small quantities of stolen merchandise, but he had always managed somehow to slip free of the net. Johnson even managed to wriggle out of it when Chicago police made a raid on his

warehouse on Milwaukee Avenue and siezed upwards of $250,000 in men's suits, women's apparel, expensive golf clubs, watches, outboard motors and all manner of luxury items that were then impounded and put on display in the Police Building at 1121 South State Street. But the State failed in its prosecution and, aside from stolen merchandise that was turned over to the merchants claiming it, the bulk of the property quickly returned to Johnson. It was interesting to police reporters that the raid, of vast proportions, was thwarted so far as prosecution was concerned by the issue of a faulty warrant: a policeman who had secured the search warrant had given a false name, and the months of preparation for Mr. Johnson's undoing went for naught on this technicality.

The Police Commissioner of Chicago maintains that his men finally put Johson away but it was the Justice Department of the Federal Government that actually nailed him down. Johnson was given a sentence of ten years in the Federal Penitentiary at Terre Haute, Indiana, for possession of goods stolen from interstate shipments. The Police Commissioner of Chicago is correct, however, when he says: "It was a Federal case but it was our evidence. I was the key witness against him."

One-Arm had been fourteen and fifteen when he was hauling stolen goods into Fish Johnson's warehouse. Quite evidently, he was still awed by the vast extent of Johnson's dealings.

"It was a big operation, the one out there on Milwaukee Avenue. It was wide open. No hidin' anything. It was so big, you *couldn't* hide it and he didn't give a damn; he had the law in his back pocket."

"Johnson also had a place up on Seminary Avenue, didn't he?"

"That was his home."

"But he sold out of there."

"Yeah, he did. They would take you around back, mostly, and into the basement. But it was up on Milwaukee that he was biggest. He really had some warehouse up there on Milwaukee. He had a lot of goods there. They got him the best you could get, too. No crap for Mr. Johnson."

"And you say he paid a flat rate, one-third of the wholesale value? On everything? Radios, television, golf clubs, clothing, everything?"

"Yeah, one-third on everything. I mean, everything he could sell. If you've got something that ain't gonna sell . . . Well, he ain't gonna buy *that*."

"But all he had to do to move the stuff he took was to cut the price below what a man would have to pay in a legitimate store?"

"Cut the price and pay the coppers off. I tell you, the coppers in a district know what's going on. They've *got* to know. The coppers ain't kiddin' anybody."

"Do you think that there are any coppers, say, walking around in Fish Johnson's clothes today?"

"Oh, yeah. That I'm positive of."

"Why are you so positive?"

"Well, I've seen him give suits away to coppers."

"He must have missed somebody; after all, he got caught. Now why did Fish Johnson get caught? There must be some honest coppers around who didn't take his money or his clothes."

"Well, that's the F.B.I. boys that got him."

"No, it was the Chicago police that really got him."

"Yeah, they made a raid all right, the Chicago guys. But the F.B.I. got him for bringin' the stuff across a state line. Somebody workin' for Fish goofed somewhere, and the F.B.I. . . . Well, you just don't mess with the F.B.I. You make one little mistake and you've had it, if it's the F.B.I. Now I don't know if they take a payoff or not, but you just don't mess with 'em. But look at Fish: three million dollars

worth of stuff they claim he had in that warehouse, and what do they give him? Ten years! And you don't ever serve the ten years if you keep your nose clean. He'll serve whatever time he's got to serve and he'll be out soon. He'll be out pretty soon."

"Do you think one of his own people hollered 'copper' on Fish?"

"I don't know; somebody must have. He didn't cooperate with somebody or something so they fixed him. He had angles with a lot of people, and a lot of people working for him."

"Did *you* work for him?"

"No. No, I didn't. We just got rid of our stuff there. We had a clique, I guess you call it, a mob. Big clique. We really grabbed the stuff. *Man!*"

"Tell me, what was the biggest package of stuff you ever brought to Fish Johnson?"

"Well, wait a minute . . . I remember it real clear. We went in one night with a semi-and-a-half load of stuff. Almost two semi-trailers. Big ones."

"What kind of stuff?"

"Televisions, radios, ice boxes . . ."

"Where did you get it? Hijack a truck?"

"No. I don't hijack. We went into a furniture store. Big four-story furniture store."

"When you do business with a fence on a deal like this, do you contact his people in advance or just drive up to the warehouse with the hot stuff, or what?"

"Mostly they know you are comin'. They knew it this time, that we would be coming in with a lot of stuff."

"Did they tell you what hour to get there?"

"No, you don't come at any certain hour. I mean, they know what you are going after and they just figure about what time you will be there with the stuff and they're there and they give you the price. They quote you a price. You tell

them what you are gonna try for and they quote you the price. See, if you bring it in in a big quantity like that, you get a better price. Sometimes, if it is real good stuff and hard to buy in the legitimate stores, you might even get almost half of the wholesale price."

"You mean that the fence will quote you a price even before you go out?"

"Yeah, that's how it is. They want to know what you are tryin' for and what you will bring in. Otherwise, how can they tell what they will give you? You see, sometimes—like, take Fish—he don't want some of the stuff; he's got too much already of what you plan to bring in so he tells you he don't want it, that he won't touch it. He's overloaded on it, maybe, and he wants something that's gonna make some money for him too. I mean, these boys can't afford to have stuff like . . . Well, if you have a store, you buy a few things and put 'em in the corner for the future. A fence can't afford that. A fence has got to have stuff that is movin'. Movin' all the time. So, maybe you'll say, 'I'm gonna bring in a hundred Zenith radios' and *he* will say, 'No, I've got a hundred Zenith radios already; you better bring in somethin' else.' And he'll maybe tell you what he needs."

"In advance of the job? Before you pull the burglary?"

"Right. And when you go into a place like that furniture store, you see the hundred Zenith radios right out there in front of you, but he don't want 'em so you bring in somethin' else. That way we know what we're gonna take before we go into the furniture store."

"And you know about what the price is."

"Yeah, we know what the price is and how much everybody in the clique is gonna get. When you have a big clique, and we had twenty-eight guys, you've got to operate big or nobody makes nothin'. We always had a truck. Sometimes we had two trucks working and we made some money."

"But you got caught."

"Yeah; well, them things will happen."

"How did you get caught?"

"Well . . . somebody goofed up; about like they did with Fish. They didn't get us in a burglary. They got a guy on some penny-ante thing and he started squawking his head off. They picked up the rest of us and gave us a bad time, but they didn't have anything to go on; no evidence, really, and we beat it. We beat the rap, that is. But this guy who finked, well, on account of him the outfit got busted up and the heat stays with the clique after something like this and nobody wants no part of you and . . . Well, you can't handle something like this: you've been exposed."

"What about the boy who squawked?"

"This is funny, they sent him away. He tried to wiggle out by pointing at us, and they couldn't nail us so they nailed him."

"He's in prison?"

"Yes, and everybody down there knows the story—that he finked."

"Does that even everything up? Does that square it with you for his finking?"

"No. It doesn't. There isn't any hurry. We will give him his lunch later."

"You will give him his lunch?"

"He busted up the whole outfit. You can kill a son of a bitch who will do that."

"You mean somebody will kill him?"

"I didn't say that. I won't say no more about it."

"But the gang hates the boy who talked?"

"Well, hell, how would you feel? We were doing good and he ruined it for us. We were making some money and everybody was working at it, fair and square. Everybody got his share; me too, with only one arm. How would you feel? How would you feel if you was *me?* There ain't nobody will give you a job when you've got a sheet that goes back to when

you was eight, like me. And now with one arm. We was in the money, I tell you . . . Oh, what the hell is the use of cryin' to you? What the hell does anybody care? But with one arm, how would *you* feel?"

8

The eighth boy : "Jonah"

We talked to the Eighth Boy in a cell at Bridewell. You could see the free world through the bars of the cell window and the Eighth Boy seemed enthralled by the sight of the sun bathing the green, growing things and the flow of movement in the free world beyond the wall.

"It looks pretty out there," the boy said. "It looks real nice."

There is nothing pretty within the old walls of Bridewell; the buildings are rank with decay, as are many of the men imprisoned there, and the grounds are barren. Only rarely, on a brief visit to the front buildings, does an inmate get a view of the flowers and shrubbery cultivated to please the eye of a passer-by.

"It looks pretty out there . . ."

When you hear something like that from a young man who is locked up, it grows in your mind like a gigantic echo. For you know that a hundred thousand times a day—in all the jails and reformatories and prisons—someone is saying or

thinking something like that as he looks through the cell bars at the world outside.

There are more persons in prison in the United States at this time than ever before. The prison population of the nation is approximately 190,000. Some 169,000 are locked up in State prisons and 21,000 are in Federal penitentiaries. The total prison population would be greater than it is, except that there is no more room in the prisons; James V. Bennett, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, has pointed out that there was an increase of sixty-nine percent in the number of major crimes in the nation between 1940 and 1956, but an increase of only eleven percent in the number of persons sent to prison. Bennett suggests that part of the explanation for the disparity lies in the fact that probation and suspended sentences are frequently decreed by the courts as a substitute for imprisonment.

The percentage of people who are serving time in American prisons is quite small, when viewed against the background of the total population. However, to cite Illinois as an example, eighty-six persons per 100,000 are in prison —and Illinois, with about 8,100 persons locked up, runs some twenty-five percent below the national average.

But statistics evade the human considerations of the problem. There is stark reason for reflection, in the comment of James A. Johnston, former Warden of Alcatraz: "The finest prisons in the world are only monuments to neglected youth; the crime problem is the boy problem."

One might also say that every prison in the world is a mausoleum of human love, hope, and ambition. There is opportunity for a boy or a man to be reborn in prison and come back to the free world, dedicated to a life of honesty. There is a dramatic battle within the man or boy who seeks to attain that goal, and the sad fact is that many never know the goal is there.

The Eighth Boy, whom we called "Jonah," had engaged

in frightful struggles. He was a large, slow-moving boy, with big, watery, brown eyes set deep in the black plainness of his sensitive face. He had a large head and seemed utterly destitute; he had the manner of someone who is friendless and resigned to the emptiness of his existence.

We had advice that Jonah was an emotional jungle and we had a chronicle of his psychic and physical failings. He was a Negro youth with a bisexual record and a hatred of his father who, he felt, had made him what he was, a deeply troubled boy.

Yet, as we sat there with him, there was no sign of the crises that bubbled within him.

"I was born in Tennessee and I have been in Chicago since I was one year old. Now I am twenty."

"When was the first time you were in trouble?"

"When I was a little kid, eight or nine. It started out with playin' hooky from school and stuff like that, and stayin' out late at night, and they picked me up and took me to Juvenile."

"Did they put you in the Home itself? Juvenile?"

"Oh, no. Well, every time I went to Juvenile, they would let me go; aah, my mother came to get me, you know. And so it was something like playin', you know, 'cause I always felt that my mother would come and get me. But after a while things didn't turn out that way . . . They started keepin' me at Juvenile. Then I went to Parental School and I was there a month and I got out and they sent me back again and so on. Well, I got with some friends of mine and we all stole a motor scooter and when we got picked up I was the only one that got caught. So . . . well, I went back to Parental School and then I got picked up with some more friends of mine for burglary, but only two of us got caught —there was my friend and I—and we went to St. Charles."

"What did you burglarize?"

"It was a A & P store."

"What did you get?"

"Well, we didn't get anything. We got caught. Attempt-in'."

"And they gave you time at St. Charles?"

"Well, they didn't give me any time, but I was there for about three months and I ran away. It is easy to run away."

"And how old were you then?"

"I was fourteen. It was six years ago."

"What happened after that?"

"Well, when we ran away from St. Charles I was with three other guys and we stole a Buick and we ran out of gas. And we started to walk on the highway and we got took to the Kane County jail and the Warden of St. Charles—well—he didn't want to take us back. He said we was what they calls 'incorrigibles.' So we had to stay in the jail, so we got sentenced to one-to-three each and that was in Sheridan."

"What did you get that for? Stealing the car?"

"Yes."

"What did you do, put a jumper on it?"

"No, it was a Buick and the ignition key was left in."

"So you were going on fifteen when you went down to Sheridan."

"Yes."

"Do you like Sheridan better than you like St. Charles?"

"Well, it's a lot cleaner than St. Charles and they feed you a little better there and it's more *secure* than St. Charles."

"All right. When did you get out of there? Sheridan?"

"Well, I made the parole from Sheridan five years ago and I was out five months, and I went back. It was for stealin' a car that I went back and I was supposed to have robbed a guy, but that I didn't do. And so they sentenced me to two-to-four, running concurrently with one-to-three; so I done four years—no, three years and a few months. And then I was released."

"How old were you then?"

"I was nineteen."

"A year ago."

"Yes. Less."

". . . Did you ever have a job?"

"Well, I had a job and I've had odd jobs like dishwasher and being a bus boy. But I mean the jobs were hard to get."

"You were a bus boy?"

"At the Edgewater Beach Hotel."

"Well, that ought to have paid pretty well."

"You make good tips."

"So why didn't you keep that job?"

"Well, I wanted to go into the service. I tried to join and they said I couldn't because of my record, that I had committed a felony. And they said something about the Army not passing any waivers. So I went to my draft board and I enlisted to be drafted and I was drafted. And then I got my papers and . . . well, I got my papers and I got into this trouble and when I was supposed to take my physical test —I was in jail and so I couldn't. And, well, I didn't get to go take my test, you know."

"Why were you in jail this time?"

"Well, it's for stealin' an auto, but I was with the boy that stole it. So, as they say, I'm just as guilty as he is."

"You're taking a fall for being in a stolen auto, is that what you're saying?"

"Yes."

"You think you're going up again?"

"I don't know, I haven't any idea."

". . . Did you ever use a gun?"

"Oh, no. I never used a gun. I never used a gun."

"Do you know boys who live by the gun? Stickup boys?"

"No, I don't."

"Nobody who owns a gun?"

"Well, truthfully, no; I don't know any."

"Burglars? You know burglars?"

"Burglars? Yes, I know."

"What do you figure is the difference?"

"Well, a guy fears more, holding a gun in his hand, because he figures that if he kills someone . . . He knows the penalty, you know. But there are some guys that would rather go out and burglarize because they figure like this: it is more sneaky, but guys that have a gun in their hands, they can only mean one thing, you know. Like if they know someone is trying to catch them, well, then they will probably shoot them. Well, a burglar, he don't take chances that way. He figures, well, he will go out and rob a place, breakin' into it, and get whatever he can find. But a robber with a gun—well, he wants money."

"When a boy goes out burglarizing, in a warehouse or something, is it normal procedure for him to have a radio with police calls on it?" This is often the custom of professional burglars, but juveniles do not bother with police calls.

Jonah said: "Well, I mean, I don't know much about that. Because, I mean, the guys I know . . . Well, they're not no professional burglars; they're just guys that haven't got any jobs and they need some money, you know, and that's about the only way they can think to get it."

"What kind of places do these friends of yours burglarize?"

"Well, stores and houses and cleaners, for clothes, and gas stations for stuff you can sell; cars, too, and that's about all that I know of."

"Is it easy to dispose of the stuff? Can you sell it?"

"Yes. There are some guys that knows guys, they call themselves fences. Junk dealers or stuff. Well, they sell it to them."

"And not much to show for it? Not much profit?"

"No."

"You are almost twenty and you've spent . . . You've spent about five years of your life locked up in one place or another?"

"Yes."

"You mentioned when we began to talk . . . Looking through the bars at the sun shining and the green things out there—"

"It makes you feel bad by bein' in, you know. It makes you want to be out there. And all kinds of things run through your mind. Like, say, you say, 'Well, there might be some hope.' And then again you say, 'Well, I'll probably be out there again.' And so you just set and wait to find out what happens. But doing time is hard on everybody. There isn't anyone can say he can do good time. Like I been in jail here three weeks and it seems like maybe three years."

"But whether you beat this or take a fall, you get out only to get in again; you're out and then you're in again. Is this for the rest of your life?"

"Well, I've talked to lots of guys that have done time, you know, and these guys think like this: they say, 'The people don't care what you do, you know. People don't care nothin' about you.' And they say there's only one thing for them to do because it's all they know, and if they keep goin' to jail and comin' out, then they haven't got a chance to learn to do anything else. Burglars and such."

"Car thieves too?"

"Well, a guy that steals a car now, that's something altogether a little different. Like these young kids, they steal cars because it's exciting, you know. And then there's some of them steal cars because they have to go places. And some only steal cars because, you know, it's something like a business."

"You mean, you can sell parts of them?"

"Yes."

"And nobody argues if you have four new tires off a new Cadillac?"

"That's right."

"You can peddle them?"

"They steal the hub caps off them. The radio you can take out. That's about all. And the battery."

"You can always peddle these things?"

"Yeah, and the people they buy 'em. But then when you get caught and they hear about it, well, they always say, 'I always knew he was a bad egg.' They down you, when they're the ones that actually buy the stuff."

"Down you?"

"Yeah, when you are in trouble. Then they are not going to help to get you out of trouble, but yet they'll buy the stuff that you got."

"And they know it's hot?"

"They know it's hot."

"Gives you a funny view of human nature?"

"Well, people are very strange. They are very hard to understand, you know, and everybody's mind just don't work the same way."

"You think about people when you are serving time?"

"You do. Yes, you do."

"Does it make a boy coming out of a place like Sheridan sort of . . ." I was searching for the word ". . . desperate?"

"Well," he thought it over, "I wouldn't say that. Rather, I could say— Well, an institution cannot change a boy, you know, no matter what they do to him. And not people. I mean, I've had it pretty rough, you know, every place I've been. But when you get out, it is different. The boy himself has got to decide if he wants to change, you know. Because the mind, that's a very tricky thing. What's in the mind, it's what people have you to believe and it is the people around you who teach you certain things. And you learn from every-

body that you're around. At Sheridan, when I left there . . . Well, I mean, there was times when I was there that I believe I could actually have killed with my bare hands for what had happened, for what had been done to me, the things I never had and the punishment, I mean. For instance, I tried to escape there and I was punished for it. It wasn't any brutal stuff, you know, just thrown in a dungeon; it was something like a dungeon. Well, they were feeding me bread and milk and every third day you would get a full meal. It was in the wintertime and it was pretty cold and I didn't have any clothes . . . The guards, well, they made things hard on me and I felt that I had a grudge against everybody and you can kill with your bare hands— But then when you get out, somehow it is different." He turned away and looked through the window.

". . . What kind of a home life did you have?"

"Well, I've never had a father."

"Never had a father?"

"Well, I mean, my father— Well, when I was small, well, he just didn't come around. I never knew him."

"Is he still living?"

"Yes."

"Do you ever see him?"

"Well, I have seen him . . . Well, now I'm almost twenty and I've seen him around six times, I'll say, in all those years."

"Did he ever help you?"

"No, never."

"In any way at all?"

"No, he never bought me no socks, clothes, nothing."

"Give you any money?"

"No."

"When was the last time you saw him?"

". . . It was this year, around about three months ago."

"How did you happen to see him then?"

"Well, my stepmother died and I went over to see him and ask him how she die and all that, you know. And so, I mean, we didn't have too many words to speak to each other. I mean, I have a dislike for him, you know; I don't know why, but it's just that way."

"Because he neglected you?"

"Well—yes, because when I small, well, he never done anything for me; then too, I think if I would have had a father, I think I wouldn't have been in this trouble. Well, I mean, all kids, you know, they need both of their parents, their father *and* their mother. In most cases you know, the kid's in trouble— Well, they haven't got no father or no mother. If there is a divorce and it breaks up their home— The kid feels bad behind that, feels like he's not wanted. Like the rest of the kids have something you haven't got, you know. Like some kids can say, 'My father, aah, have done this for me and he've took me here' and you can't say it. And my own father have done this to me."

"Do you hate your father?"

"Well, I mean, that's a pretty hard question to ask, you know, because he *is* my father. But I have a dislike for him, yes."

". . . When was the last time you had a gun in your hand?"

"This year."

"Where?"

"Well, my mother had got a gun. I stole it out of the house."

"What kind of a gun is it?"

"It's a .38."

"Did you ever point that gun at anybody?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Well, it was in my pocket and he didn't know it."

"Who?"

"My father."

"You pointed the gun at your father?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Well, I was drunk. I don't know what made me feel that way. But it was right after I got out of jail and she called him because I didn't know where he lived. And so when he came to pick me up in the car, he wanted me to spend the night with him. So all sorts of things run through my mind, but actually I wanted to kill him for what I believed he had caused. I started to kill him, you know, but I keep on thinking, you know, and . . . Well, I didn't kill him."

"You had the gun on him for a long time?"

"Yes, all the time he was drivin'. But he didn't know."

"How long?"

"Well, about close to a half hour."

"With the gun pointed at him?"

"Well, it was in my coat pocket. Layin' across my lap, while I was plannin', tryin' to decide if I should shoot him or not, you know."

"Did he ever know that you had the gun?"

"He never knew."

"And what was it that kept you from killing him?"

"Well, when you go to kill somebody— Well, my mind just drifted to the Bible and stuff like that and so I just remember, you know, that it says if you kill a person that you go to hell, you know. And so, well, I just thought to myself, 'No, I can't do that.' But I still had it in my mind that I would kill him for what I think he done to me. But then, I mean, we get to his house and I went into his house and then I see some kids that are my half-brothers and sisters and that changed my mind entirely, you know, because now, you know, I knew I couldn't do it. . . . I looked at all them little kids and I thought, 'Well, if I kill him, they will have to go through the same thing that I've

been through.' So, you know, I knew it wouldn't be fair if I should kill their father. And, I mean, I kept the gun in my pocket and I played with my half-brothers and sisters and then I went back home, you know, to the house of my mother. And then I feel peculiar and feel good that I have not killed my father and I read the Bible a little bit and that part where it say about the little children, the things you should do for them, and the part where it say whatsoever you do for whosoever the Lord will repay and I have ask the Lord will He help me and fix me up so I stay out of jail, spit me out of here like Jonah was spat out of his whale, and I don't know how the Lord will work it out for me but I feel good now, inside, and it will be all right. I feel this boy will be all right."

9

The ninth boy : "The Great Magoo"

The Cook County official who took us down into the jail to talk with the Ninth Boy had misgivings.

The official delayed his departure until my associate, Daniel Hozak, the engineer, had quietly set up the tape recorder in one corner of the cell and had handed me a microphone. Dan had then gone back to the recorder, evincing no apparent interest in the boy who sat smoking, head up and sullen, on a chair beside me.

The County Jail official had orders to leave us on our own to get the facts out of the boy as best we could. We were ready, yet he could not make up his mind to clear out. It was obvious from the glances he threw at the boy that he doubted the wisdom of his orders. Finally, looking at the wall, the official said in the boy's full hearing: "Some of them stink!"

At this, the boy raised his head and blew a thin, clear stream of smoke at the official, tacitly defying him to say it again.

The jail official took his leave, hesitating once more at the steel door of the cell before locking us in. Nailing the boy to the chair with a last dirty look, he said, "Don't let him spit in your face. He thinks he's the 'Great Magoo,' a name I got for all the mutton-heads who think they're big wheels."

The door closed behind him and, though I gave my associate the eye to turn on the tape recorder, I made no effort to start a conversation. It was at least three minutes before the Ninth Boy broke the silence to say, matter-of-factly:

"Do you think I would spit in your face?"

"No," I said.

"There are two of you," the boy said, motioning to my associate in the corner.

"That's right," I said.

"I got nuthin' against you," the boy said.

"Fine," I said, with no feeling.

There was a short pause. Then the Ninth Boy motioned to my associate again and said, "Do you have to have him?"

"No," I said, "he can work on the outside if that's how you want it. We can run a mike cord in here or I can get a recorder and work in here alone, if that's how you want it."

My associate, hearing all this on a headset that fed off the tape recorder, fiddled idly with a connection and did not look our way.

"I like to work alone," the Ninth Boy said. But he did not ask me again to send the engineer out. "You don't need nobody. Nobody needs nobody. You get into trouble when you don't work alone."

The comment fitted the Great Magoo. He was insolent, cynical, a boy of medium stature, nervous and argumentative, with a narrow face and a mean look in his gray eyes. He was a sloppy-looking boy, dressed in expensive clothing that was neither clean nor pressed; he wore expensive shoes that were scuffed and unshined, although obviously new.

The Great Magoo pulled one foot up on the edge of his chair and backed away slightly, as if to indicate that the conversation was objectionable. He chain-smoked as we talked, dragging deeply, then pulling the cigarette from his lips in an exaggerated gesture.

The Great Magoo was an unkempt picture of disdain. His manner was artificial and it was difficult to reconcile his almost ludicrous portrayal of a tough guy with the information we had that he was, indeed, a dangerous young thief who had frequently filled his pockets with the proceeds of daring burglaries. The boy was wasteful and imprudent, scorning the possibility that people can be warm, kind, helpful. Unlike many of the others who had a longing to be loved and wanted, who had an ache to belong to somebody, the Great Magoo had convinced himself that this was a world of thieves and that, like himself, no one was to be trusted. He believed, as he said, that "you get in trouble when you don't work alone."

"Depends upon what kind of work you do," I said.

"I don't need nobody. I proved that early. You don't know about that."

"You ran away from home when you were twelve years old," I said.

"How do you know?"

"You did," I said, quickly. "You ran away from home when you were twelve."

"I wanted to make it on my own. I wanted to see I don't have to depend on nobody, that I was good enough myself to go out into the world."

"Well, it's normal for a kid who is twelve to depend upon his folks, isn't it?"

"I thought about my folks. But I thought about myself too. You think a kid can't make it by himself? I made it. I made it all the way to Ohio."

"From Chicago to Ohio?"

"Worked a year; on a farm."

"And this was better than living at home?"

"You bet. I was makin' my own money, doin' what I wanted— I didn't have nobody tell me when to come in and go out and what to do."

"But don't you really think that a kid of twelve ought to have somebody tell him what to do?"

"Yeah, I guess he ought to. But I didn't need nobody."

"But they grabbed you for running away from home . . ."

"No, I come back to Chicago and then they got me. I should of stood in Ohio. They give me Juvenile."

"And how long were you in Juvenile?"

"About three, four months. My mother finally come and got me, and I went home again."

"You stay?"

"Yeah. Stayed for a while and then ran away again."

"Why?"

"Same reason. Wanted to make it on my own. Anybody's a bum who can't make it on his own."

"There must be more reasons than you're telling me. I mean, you weren't having a happy time at home, is that what . . ."

"Well, I had it rugged all my life; I mean, I never had it right in front of me; I had to go out and get it myself. My mother used to put clothes on me, give me a quarter for the show. But all the rest I had to get myself. My mother was on relief. My old man, he was nothin'."

"What do you mean, he was nothing?"

"He used to hit her and everything else."

"He would what?"

"He would hit her and everything else. He drank."

"Did he work?"

"He worked, but by the time he got home he didn't have nothin' left. And my mother started workin'. There was nothin' there for me."

"All right. When you ran away the second time, what did you do?"

"Stayed out about three days and then they got me again. Then they put me in a foster home and then, after that, I was goin' from foster home to foster home, runnin' away and gettin' kicked out. And when I ended up, I went to St. Charles."

"For what?"

"I can't remember what I went to St. Charles for. They were going to send me to Parental School but I was too old for Parental, so they sent me to St. Charles. Stood in St. Charles about four days; ran away; stole a car in South Aurora or Elgin or somewheres out there, and come to Chicago; got money and clothes and then headed for Kansas City."

"Where did you get the money?"

"I knew a coupla girls."

"You got money from a couple of girls?"

"What's wrong with that? Then I got busted in Steelville, Missouri."

"For what?"

"Car theft and runnin' away from St. Charles."

"The car you stole when you got out of St. Charles? Your transportation?"

"Transportation."

"You weren't going to strip the car?"

"No, I don't go along on strippin' cars."

"But they got you in Missouri for the car you took from Illinois?"

"Yes. And so they put me in the Steelville Jail and we stood there for three weeks."

"Did you say 'we'?"

"I had three other rap partners. We were all in it together and all of us was in the hot car and they got everybody. We stood in jail there at Steelville, and then somehow

we are sent back to Kane County, in Illinois, where St. Charles is located at and we go to court and they threw it at us. I don't know yet how it all worked; but I know we got sentenced to one-to-three at Sheridan for somethin'. I did two and a half years there, Sheridan. Got out June 4th."

"You were extradited from Missouri and you stood trial in Illinois and you got one-to-three years at Sheridan, and you try to tell me you don't know what happened?"

"I know, car theft. I drove a car from Illinois to Kansas City."

"Why didn't they hit you on the Dyer Act?"

"You mean that Federal law, takin' a stolen car from one state to the other?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. Kids we were, I guess. The Feds were in on it when we got picked up but they dropped it and the State took over. I went across a state line, like you say, and they could of give it to me, but the Feds dropped it and I got one-to-three from the State."

It is usual for an offender under twenty-one who has been arrested for a Federal violation to be turned over by the "Feds" to a lesser authority, so I was not surprised to hear that this had happened to the Great Magoo. In his case, the State of Illinois took over because it was in Illinois that the car had been stolen.

"All right; you spent two and a half years on that one-to-three at Sheridan— How old were you when you got out?"

"June, I got out, like I say. I was nineteen."

"That was only a few months ago. That was this year?"

"Yeah, this year. And now you gonna say what am I doin' back in the can?"

"Yes."

"Well, I got busted—three ways. I got out of Sheridan and I got busted for possession of narcotics; I got caught; they nailed me, but I beat it. Then I got busted for forgery,

and I got ninety days. Now I'm in here for burglary, and I go to court tomorrow."

"You said narcotics. What kind of narcotics?"

"Marijuana."

"You smoke a couple before you go out on something?"

"No. That's only for pleasure, marijuana. I am only on the marijuana for pleasure."

"Even so, pleasure or business, they've got you for burglary. How will you feel if they send you up for burglary?"

"I do my time. All I can do is my time."

"And when you do your time and get out . . . What will you do when you get out?"

"Do what I been doin'. That's all I *can* do. Can't get no jobs. Tried. When I got out of Sheridan, I didn't want no more and I tried to do it straight, I really tried; I worked three months at a shoe store."

"Doing what?"

"Sellin' shoes. I was good at it. You sell shoes, you make money."

"Why didn't you keep it, the job?"

"They found out I had a record. There were . . . Well, it was one of them bonding things—insurance or something—and they found out about it. They found out I had a record at Sheridan and that was that. They threw me out. They said, 'You're fired.' And I said, 'Why?' And they said, 'You know why.' They didn't want to fire me; I was a pretty good salesman. Then, after that, I got discouraged and I figured I'd just have to be a crook. So far it's been all right with me."

"What do you mean, so far it has been all right with you?"

"Pretty prosperous. I had two cars, I had clothes and money and everything else. I ain't got no complaints."

"Even if they send you away, you've got no complaints?"

"Look, all they can give me on this is a year. I can do that. I'm in Boys' Court and the max. is one year. I don't

bother doin' a year. If I was older, all right, I could get five or six years, yeah. I'd do those too."

"And when you came out, you'd go back into burglary again?"

"No, I wouldn't go back into burglary no more."

"Why not? You say it worked out nicely for you."

"Look, I got busted on it. And that's one thing about me: I don't go back to anything I got busted on. No more burglary."

"What's left? You get a gun?"

"No. No, I don't think I've got enough heart for a gun. It is easy and quick, a gun; in a way, it is easy. But, no, I figure I'd kill somebody and then I'd go to the chair and I don't want to go to the chair because I don't think . . . I could take the chair. I'll probably go into con things, a con game; that's about the best I can come up with, sittin' here talkin'."

"But you must have done pretty well in burglary. Two cars. What kind of places did you burglarize? You must have hit some nice places."

"The best. The risk is the same, hittin' houses, so pick the best. If you don't get caught, you get somethin'. I used to go out in Oak Park, River Forest. Big houses, you know. Homes. They're careless about money in them places. Money, radios, rings, watches . . . All kinda things. It's pretty good."

"You had a fence?"

"Sure I had a fence."

"Did he order the stuff or what?"

"He took whatever I had. I didn't bring him no crap; I brought him good stuff. I knew better than I should bring him a bunch of crap, or steal a bunch of crap."

"And what did he give you? What percentage of the value?"

"About a third. They all give you about a third. It's the

standard price, sort of. But they ain't runnin' no charity; unless you got something, you're just SOL and if you go two, three times and you ain't got nothin', the fella will tell you 'Keep away.' Doin' business with you is a risk for him and if you ain't got what he wants, he don't like you comin' in and riskin' him. See?"

"I see."

"So this fella I was dealin' with mostly, he wouldn't take no ash trays or souvenir stuff or nuthin' like that. He'd take radios, televisions, air conditioners, good rings, good watches. Them homes are loaded with it."

"How did a kid like you case these places in Oak Park and River Forest? You're not the kind of kid who could pass in places like that."

"If you look like you're workin', you can pass any place. See, I was workin' for a tuck-pointin' company and I still had the tuck-pointin' cards. It was easy. I would knock on the back door and if they were home, I would ask 'em did they want their house tuck-pointed. If they weren't home, I'd rob 'em."

"And how would you get in?"

"Crow bar. They ain't a home door made that will keep you out, you got a crow bar. It wasn't me. That was my partner; he was a crow bar man and he could get in just like that." The Great Magoo snapped his fingers.

"Back door," I said, speculatively.

"Yes. All flowers and stuff around to shield you. Them people are real suckers."

"And when you got in, what would you look for? The first thing?"

"Money."

"And where is the first place you would look?"

"In the bedroom, in the closets. That's where they put the money. Drawers and things."

"You'd look under mattresses?"

"We'd look everywhere. You can smell money."

"Throw the place up for grabs?"

"No. Some do. I don't. That's one thing I never did. I never broke things or ripped 'em up; I figure robbin' a house is enough. No use tearin' their property up. It don't get you nuthin'."

"You get in under cover of shrubbery and trees . . . How long would you give yourself in a house?"

"Well, if I was cool—if nobody seen me and I knew nobody seen me, and I thought I could stay in there—well, I would stretch it out to an hour. Generally, half an hour."

"You would put the money you found in your pocket and what would you do with the rest of the stuff?"

"Gather the rest of the stuff in the kitchen, near the back door."

"And how many trips would you make to your car out in the alley?"

"Only one. I'd take what I could handle and so would the crow bar man, and that was it."

"You'd leave a lot of valuable stuff in the kitchen?"

"One trip, that was it. Somebody else can do it, go back. But I won't. You're pressin' your luck. You take what you know can bring a price, and you blow."

"Those are pretty tough towns, aren't they? Oak Park and River Forest?"

"Yeah. I guess they'll shoot you out there if you give 'em cause. But I didn't spend all my time out there. I moved in Chicago, too, North Side, South Side, all over."

"And your partner, the crow bar man, is he taking this one with you?"

"Well, I had two partners. Me and my other rap partner, the crow bar, we got caught *in* the house. The other one got caught— Well, he run out and he run into two road blocks and almost tipped over two squad cars chasin' him and he got

free. But they got his license number and that's how he got caught."

"So you all go into Boys' Court tomorrow on burglary?"

"Well, I'm the one that'll get it. We had a little flippin' match in the jail house and I lost the match, so I'm pleadin' guilty and they're pleadin' innocent. I'll just say it was all my doing and the other two didn't know anything about it; that way, I'll get the year and they'll get probation. They're young. One's seventeen and the other twenty, and the one who's twenty has only got a St. Charles record and that will help him."

"Why did you have the flipping match? You were all in on it, so why don't you all take it?"

"There's no use all three of us going up. When one person can do it, why all three?"

"So you're taking the fall."

"I'm takin' the fall."

"And don't you feel bad about it?"

"No. I gambled and I lost. Gambled when I went into that house and I lost."

"How did they get you?"

"They got me in the basement. I . . . See, it was this way: my rap partner, crow bar, was in this bedroom, searchin' it and I was in the other bedroom, searchin' it. And the bedroom he was in was in front, you know, and he pulled open the Venetian blind and he seen the two squads pull up. He said, 'Here come the cops,' and he told me, 'Let's go!' See?"

"Yes."

"So we flew down the steps. I ran into the basement and he went out the back, over the railing, and started to run for the car in the alley. The cop hollered at him to stop or he would 'kill him' and they caught him. Our Number Three, in the car, sees this and takes off and the squads go after him."

"Why didn't you blow while you had the chance?"

"I didn't figure I *had* the chance. There was this little old lady who lived in the house, and now she was there and I figured they'll leave a cop with her. She sticks her head down the steps into the basement and she tells the next squad of cops that I'm in the basement. They tell her no, they don't think there is anybody in the basement, but she keeps talkin' and they come down and they found me. One cop it was who found me. And almost, he didn't."

"What do you mean, 'almost, he didn't'?"

"I was hidin' and he come down and he can't see me and he had the gun right at my face for a long while as he was lookin' around and then finally he got me."

"You were scared?"

"You're goddam right I was scared. Everybody gets scared when there's a gun pointed at their face. You are glad to be arrested if he will only put down that gun and don't shoot you."

"And that closes your career of burglary?"

"If you mean have I had it, yeah, that's my career of burglary."

"And when you get out, you graduate to something else, is that what you told me?"

"Well, I ain't goin' into anythin' on the up and up. It's gonna be crooked, what I do; I won't take no chances. The way I got it figured, all you got to do is talk and you can get what you want. There're people out there just waitin' to give you money. All you got to do is say a few nice words and let 'em think you are goin' to get 'em somethin' for nuthin'. Everybody is a crook, you know. I figure while I been in here . . . Well, I think of how I was doin' it on the street, free. Talkin' to girls and that, you know; gettin' what I want. Sweet talk. I figure it goes for everybody. People are chumps."

"What kind of girls did you know?"

"All kinds. Ones that work downtown, school girls, college girls, other kinds. You talk nice and they give you money. Decent girls, nice girls, too. *Some* decent girls, anyway."

"Why should a decent girl give you money? What could you possibly say that would make a girl who works for a living give you anything?"

For the first time, the Great Magoo smiled. "Well, you know, when you get a girl to like you . . . Well, she'll do anything for you. And you just tell her what you need and you get it. Times like when I need some money for shoes and a shirt, she'll give it to you."

"And don't you feel funny taking it?"

"No. Why should I feel funny? Money is money."

"Just like burglarizing: you grab whatever you can grab?"

"That's right. It works out, too. Pays off."

"You are actually saying, if I get this right, that crime *does* pay. Is that what you're saying?"

"That's right. That's what I say. Everybody who is smart knows it pays."

"What about all the people who say that crime does not pay?"

"They would know better if they'd ever been in crime. Of course if you're out stealin' nickels and dimes off paper stands, well, it don't pay then."

"Well, what did you get out of it? How much did you get out of it?"

"Plenty. I always had money in my pocket on the streets. Since I got out in June, I spent more money than most people ever make. When I was forgin' checks, I was makin' $200 or $300 a day. Every day."

"How did you work it?"

"It's easy. I was cashin' personal checks. They get so hungry to take you for forty or fifty cents to cash a check, you can nail them almost every time. I had my partner's I.D., his identification card. He reported it lost or stolen or

somethin' so he was in the clear. I would use the I.D. to cash a check, but they don't look at it when you show it to them and when they come lookin' for my partner, well, he didn't look like me and his signature didn't look like mine and the check people couldn't finger him. He wasn't the one that stiffed them on a check, they knew that . . . There's all kind of ways of beatin' them people. All you got to do is sit down and figure it out."

A shopkeeper pays a fee when he drops in to trade big bills for smaller ones or change. The steel worker who shuns the custom of cashing his check in a steel mill area saloon also pays a fee. Armored cars deliver money to the Currency Exchanges and frequently large sums are involved, particularly when the Exchange is located near a mill or factory where checks totaling thousands of dollars in take-home pay are issued to groups of workers at various times of the week. The few employees working in a Currency Exchange feel they are protected by a hold-up proof cage that is built at the back of the store the Exchange occupies and, for additional security, they work behind bullet-proof glass. Even so, the Currency Exchanges are tempting establishments for the stickup artist and it is not uncommon for even a young criminal to try his luck at holding them up.

A mature gang, finally blown apart by the police who caught them robbing a big dairy, had found Currency Exchanges offered easy pickings. They figured out that the Achilles heel of the average Exchange was its rear door which is most frequently at the back of the protective cage. They would batter down the rear door, which almost always faces on an open lot or alley, by slamming into it with a huge wooden ram attached to the front bumper of a stolen truck. When they would crash into a place that was in full operation, the Currency Exchange workers would be too startled to sound an alarm, aware only that their cage was now a trap. The gang would then grab all the money in

sight—a haul of fifteen or twenty thousand dollars was not unusual—and flee, usually in a stolen car that a confederate had running for them in the alley.

Another temporarily successful method of cracking Currency Exchanges came into vogue after police stakeouts had made the battering ram technique too dangerous. A man would enter an Exchange with a check in one hand and a bag of tools in another, a familiar enough sight to the cashier to allay any suspicions. Once assured that there was not a policeman in the place—and the interior of the cage can be seen through the glass window behind which the cashier stands—the hold-up man would take a big mall from his tool bag and smash the bullet-proof glass. Then he or an accomplice would push a sawed-off shotgun through the opening and demand that employees hand over whatever cash they had. The protective cage was once again a trap.

The Great Magoo was not a boy to take chances on operations of this kind. He would be more inclined to follow other techniques. A clever operator would easily cheat the Currency Exchanges of $200 or $300 a day, at least for a limited period of time. There was no reason to doubt, therefore, that the Great Magoo had flourished with his check-passing. The question was, what had he done with the money? I asked the Great Magoo, "How would you spend your take?"

"I'd go downtown and to all kinds of places. You heard of the Blue Note? The Chez Paree? The Brass Rail? All of them places . . . Bought me suits, shoes, everything."

"You really lived high, eh?"

"Haircut and shave every week. Money for everything. I lived big."

"Where did you live?"

"Well, I was livin' at the Alcazar Hotel, on Washington Boulevard. I could have had a better place, but I didn't want things to get too rich for my blood. That's the way the

police get a line on you. You're just a punk and you're livin' real big and in some fancy joint and first thing, they want to question you. Better the way I did it."

"And you had a car?"

"Like I told you, I got out in June. I've had two cars, Buick convertible and a big Olds. The best there is. So if I catch a year, I can't complain. I've had my fun. I've had my good times. I can do some time. It doesn't bother me. I can make out, in jail or out of jail."

"When they bang that gate, don't you feel anything inside of you?"

"I feel nuthin'. It's them young kids that's never been in jail that gets weepy and all that. Anybody that's did any time can take it."

"Yes, but some of them go stir crazy. There must be something more to it than you'll admit."

"Stir crazy? They go stir crazy, 'cause they're weak-minded fools. It's only the fools go around thinkin' about hangin' it up—killin' theirselves. You do 'them' a favor if you hang it up: you kill yourself and nobody else gonna have to kill you or worry about what you do next. I've never even *thought* about hangin' it up."

"Yet it's you who's referred to 'hanging it up' several times now. It does seem to be on your mind."

"Like hell. When I got that one-to-three, I was only sixteen. I didn't crack. I just took it."

"What if you were to get ninety-nine years? Could you take that?"

"I would take it. I'd be thinkin' of a way to get out and where there's a will, there's a way. I'd take a chance maybe of gettin' killed makin' a break, but that's not the same as hangin' it up."

"There are smarter men than you who dream of getting out."

"That's right. I probably couldn't figure it out either. But

I'd try. I'd always try. What have I got to lose if I got ninety-nine years? But I'll never get ninety-nine years: I won't get that careless."

"That's pretty unpredictable. But let's suppose they threw the chair at you. Could you take that?"

"The chair? Well . . . I wouldn't know. I don't like to think about things like that, the chair. I'd have to take it, if that's what I got. Cryin' and goin' crazy or anything else won't stop it. They'll carry you to the chair; they don't care. Fill you up with some drugs maybe, so you can walk up to it and sit down. If they mean to burn you, they will burn you and you can't do anything about it. But I don't let things like that bother me 'cause I know I'm not gonna kill nobody."

"How do you know?"

"Well, it's just some instinct in me that knows I'm not gonna kill nobody. I never carry a gun. I never carry a knife."

"How do you know you won't? How do you know you won't 'buddy up' with a stickup man on a big job that looks real easy?"

"I don't go for a gun or a knife. If you work with a gun, some day you'll use that gun. I'll quit and go square before I work with a gun. I'll get me a job and go to work!"

"Why don't you get a job and go to work anyway? Give you peace of mind, wouldn't it?"

"I like fast life. Money, clothes, cars— I like girls. Where am I gonna get a job that'll let me have those things?"

"Would you take a job if somebody offered you a good one?"

". . . No, I don't think I would. I can't stand that makin' $55 a week, or even $75, and comin' home to a wife and a bunch of cryin' kids. That ain't for me."

"What do you feel about the kids you grew up with? Those kids have got jobs."

"Yeah, they got jobs, some of them. They're married. But it doesn't appeal to me. Why should I have to work to support somebody else? I'm for myself; I don't care about nobody else."

"You want to be a big shot."

"I want to be a big shot. That's about it."

"Why should you be a big shot? Who are you that you should be a big shot?"

"Why shouldn't I? There's a lot of other big shots."

"I know, but most of them have contributed something to the pot. What are you contributing?"

"My services."

"As a what, a burglar? You think if you're a good burglar you're entitled to true luxuries? Is that it? Automatically?"

"Listen: If I'm a good burglar, luxuries come automatically. From a bad burglary, I don't get nuthin'. A good burglary: happiness."

"You believe in people being happy?"

"Yes."

"Do you ever think about the people you steal from? Maybe you caused them a little unhappiness."

"I don't never think about it. I don't let myself think about it."

"What's the most you ever found, in cash, in a home?"

"Oh, about $300. In one bundle. In a wallet."

"How did you feel when you found it?"

"I was happy."

"And how do you think the guy felt when he came home and his wallet . . ."

"He was sad."

"Maybe he needed it for something important. A family vacation, an operation . . ."

"That's just his tough luck. You don't understand. When you're out there doin' a job, you don't think about somebody else. You think about yourself. You want that money. If you

didn't want the money— Well, it's no use you goin' on a job feelin' sad and everything else."

"Do you ever feel sad?"

"No. Only time I'd feel sad— If my mother died, that's the only time I'd be sad."

"What about your father, if he died?"

"Well, he died awready. I was too small to be sad."

"Do you imagine that when your mother thinks about you, she is sad?"

"Well, I guess. But this is my business."

"They seem to lock you up pretty often, make you do a lot of time."

"No more after this. I been stupid, but next time I'm gonna have me a lawyer and money. I'm gonna keep me a lawyer and I'll put away some of the money to pay for it. If you wanna stay out of here, that's what it takes. Look at them wheels in the Syndicate. They get picked up and the lawyer is runnin' down with a writ to get 'em out before they even got the guy to the station. That's brains. That's what you need."

"You think you can get a lawyer to work for you?"

"You mean he wouldn't want my money on account of he knew how I got it? That's a laugh. All I got to do is save some of the money. See, before I sat down and thought about this—before I got busted this time—I used to spend my money, all of it. I always figured when I ran short I could go get some more. I was smart; I only spent it on myself. Oh, I took out girls, yeah, but that was for my own pleasure."

"Neighborhood girls?"

"Neighborhood girls, girls I'd pick up downtown, all kinds of girls. The Blue Note and the Chez Paree, I *lived*, man."

"Didn't they think it funny that a kid of twenty was spending big money? Thirty or forty at a crack at the Blue Note or the Chez Paree?"

"Oh, that was nuthin'. There's stickup kids around my neighborhood that was spendin' $100, $150 a night on trips downtown, with girls from the neighborhood who knew they didn't work or nothin'. Girls don't care. They don't care where you get your money. If you got money and you want to spend it, all right, they're right there to help you. *Buy* them things, that's what they want. They don't care where the dough come from." His attitude was a conflicting blend of worldly wisdom and self-righteousness.

". . . What do you really think of yourself?"

"I think I'm all right. If I didn't, I wouldn't be much good."

"Do you think you're smart?"

"I'm smart enough not to come back here to jail no more and it takes a pretty good brain to stay out of here when you do what I do."

"Are there any other smart guys in here, aside from you?"

"In here? Well, I think everybody's a fool until proved different. Me and everybody else. You too, all fools until you've proved different."

"Did you ever meet any smart people who are legitimate?"

"Uh-uh! There ain't too many smart legitimate people. They all got their hands in the pot, takin' what they can. Everybody's a crook one way or another. Don't you know that?"

"Nobody is on the square?"

"Very few, as I see it. Everybody is in it for theirselves. They'll take whatever you can give 'em, but if you get in trouble— Well, they're not gonna look out for you."

"But you're taking the fall for this burglary."

" 'Cause I lost the gamble. If one of them had lost, they'd of took the blame."

"You think they would?"

"Oh yes, they would. They would of took it. But I lost;

I gambled and I lost, and that's all I can do. I'll have to do the year."

"Somehow you lost more than a year: you're kicking away a last chance to get straightened out and live on the up-and-up."

"Not for me, no up-and-up. I tried it. Oh, I even tried to get into the Army and they wouldn't even take me in the Army. You got a record, they don't want you. They didn't give me no break and now I don't want no break. I'll make my own breaks."

"It will be rough going."

"The rough come first and the easy last. If the easy comes first, you can bet the rough will come last. It balances out. This way, I'll have my good times."

"You're willing to trade time, to serve time, to 'live big'?"

"That's right."

"Do you really believe this?"

"I wouldn't be tellin' it to you if I didn't believe it. I'm not gettin' nuthin' for this, talking to you. Why should I lie or make up stuff for you?"

It was true that the Great Magoo was under no obligation to talk. None of the boys who talked to us got paid for it, neither the boys who were serving time nor those who were out. At the conclusion of many of these interviews, the boys would be offered a small gratuity as we sat there in silence, smoking out cigarettes and breaking the spell that had lasted sometimes as long as two hours, with the wind-up wheel of the tape recorder slowly rolling all that time. Some accepted eagerly, some reluctantly. And one boy who had said he was in difficult circumstances was rather amused at the amount offered and spurned it. The Great Magoo, when his turn came, rejected it coldly.

"Doesn't it depress you," I said, "doesn't it get you down to be locked up?"

"Oh, you shake that off," he said. "Anyhow, like I told you, I'm not comin' in here or in any other jail either no more."

"You hope."

"I know!"

"You can't control it if you try to beat the world out of a living. You can always take a fall for the con game."

"No. After this, I'll never be without the money and a lawyer. Listen: you know why I'm sittin' here locked up? I got busted because I was with a young punk that made too much noise with a crow bar, and I didn't have the money for a lawyer to get me out."

"Lawyers don't win them all."

"You pay 'em enough and they'll get you out of anything."

"What if they fumble and you take a fall?"

"Well, that's the gamble of it, I suppose. If I've got to do more time—if I get Stateville or some place like that—well, I'll just have to do my time."

"In again, out again for a whole lifetime?"

"You could put it that way."

"And where does it end? What is the finish?"

"The finish? It will end when I'm dead. When I die or when they give me so much time that I can't take it and I hang it up. That is the finish: when I'm dead."

10

The tenth boy : "The Champ"

When you investigate the backgrounds of juvenile delinquents, you will find their troubled lives are almost always rooted in the emotional rubble of overtly or tacitly broken homes. Even worse than the separation of father and mother, with the children forced to choose between them or consigned arbitrarily by the courts to live with one or the other, or neither, is the *un*broken home constantly rocked by explosive quarrels of father and mother; this, too, can lead a child into anti-social acts rooted in insecurity, uncertainty and fear. Sometimes an uncontrollable thing such as the death of a parent, or severe financial reversals will then trigger an act of teenage criminality. There is little probability that someone outside the family, particularly a stranger—a reporter like myself or even a trained social worker—can isolate the cause of a juvenile disaster. Unless you are prepared to study a case thoroughly, talking to many people who know the boy in a variety of situations, you will have difficulty tracing your way back to the root core of a juvenile

crime. The boy in serious trouble characteristically camouflages the bleak spots of his home life. A boy in a reformatory will accept patiently the stigma of his own crimes, no matter how embarrassing, but he will spit and fight like a trapped cat if the secrets of his home life concern his mother or his sisters.

The lack of moral standing of a teenage thief's mother or sister is unmentionable, even though it may be widely recognized that she is the neighborhood tramp. In any circumstance this side of total despair, a boy's womenfolk provide the most obvious avenue of hope when he has wandered into a life of crime. To surrender this hope on the altar of their personal behavior is tantamount to renouncing one's major chances for a better life.

The Tenth Boy to whom we talked—we called him "The Champ" for he was by all odds the title-holder of our juvenile thieves and a boy who was quick to fight—punched a Chicago policeman for an obscene, uncalled-for remark the officer had made about the boy's mother in a moment of cruelty. The Champ was quite aware of the consequences of clobbering a policeman, and in a district station at that, but this was an heroic situation comparable, in some measure, to that of a small nation digging in for a fight against an all-powerful aggressor.

The Champ was a special kind of boy. He was handsome, well-proportioned, and his arms were thick and muscular. He had fine features, although his handsome face had a look of fatigue, as if he had lived too hard for his nineteen years. He was a well-coordinated boy, with a habit of cocking his head at you when he heard something interesting, his dark, curly hair dancing as he did so. The Champ was personable, and he was candid.

The Champ was serving six months in the Bridewell. He was serving them in the modern, two-story building that looks so conspicuously new in that sprawling, walled-in area

of ancient jail buildings on Chicago's southwest side. Officials of the Bridewell have been making an effort to keep youthful offenders apart from older and more confirmed criminals and, as part of its rehabilitation program, Bridewell houses a branch of the Chicago public school system.

On the day I talked with the Tenth Boy, there was a legal holiday and therefore no school. The teenage boy "on the outside" probably spent his day playing baseball or handball, or went on a picnic, went fishing, or did any one of the great number of things that appeal to boys when they have a free day. The Champ and his fellow-inmates spent their holiday in jail. Eighty or ninety boys could be seen through the barred windows of the locked doors at the end of their dormitory, lounging on their double-deck beds, reading comic books or, many of them, looking dreamily into space.

An old-time prize fighter was the uniformed guard at the door of their lockup, and he had been officially advised to expect a visitor. When I got there with my engineer and his tape recorder—having been escorted through the dilapidated administration building, across the barren yard, and to the new two-story building for youthful offenders—the old pug seemed pleased that something was happening to break the monotony of the day.

The guard hurried to get our boy out of the dormitory, as if this were an urgent visit, and then, with exceeding dispatch, locked me, the engineer, and the boy in the school principal's office. He left us with a satisfied nod which indicated that he had taken care of his part of this affair. The Tenth Boy had studied the guard searchingly, as if he had never seen him before—although we knew that he saw him all day, every day.

"Do you know who that guard is?" I asked.

The boy shook his head.

"He's an old-time heavyweight named Tuffy Griffiths."

"Does he know you?"

I shook my head. "He did, once, but I guess he's forgotten."

"Was he any good as a fighter?"

"He was game as a good bull," I said.

"Could he hit?"

"He was light for a heavyweight," I said. "Some people thought he'd win the title, but he never quite made it. He was fighting a few years after Dempsey and Tunney retired, and they didn't have much then in the way of top-flight fighters: that big clown from Italy, Carnera, and a fellow from England they called Fainting Phil Scott; then there was another character named Otto Van Porat who had a glass chin. This guard on the door, this Tuffy Griffiths, he fought them all. He was as good as any of them and he was the darling of the Chicago Stadium. Big hero here in Chicago."

The Champ looked at me steadily. "Did he make any money?"

"Plenty," I said.

"What'd he do with it? Who got it?"

I shook my head.

"He's marked up bad and he acts like he took some awful beatings."

"That's right. He was too small to fight heavyweights and he was brittle; they could all hurt him."

The Champ turned his eyes toward the door and, shaking his head disgustedly, said, "That's the way it always is. They beat you up and you end up with nothing. Like him, working for peanuts. Is that how everything winds up? Everybody working for peanuts? Ain't there anything that pays off?"

We stopped talking to light cigarettes.

The Champ inhaled deeply a few times, saying nothing.

Then he said, "You'll want to know how old I am. I'm nineteen. I feel like I'm ninety-nine."

"I have heard people say you're as old as you feel," I said, leaving the door open for him.

"Then I *am* ninety-nine," the Champ said. "I'm not coppin' a plea. It is my fault. But it seems sometimes like the whole world is against you, that no matter how you try or what you do there is always somebody smarter than you who will take you for whatever you've got."

I had no comment.

The Champ was silent for a few moments, too, then he said, "I know you came here to ask me questions. You go ahead: Ask me."

"I wonder if you'd mind telling me about your family . . ."

The Champ grunted. "My family it's a sort of bad one. My mother, she drinks, and my brother drinks and I drink. My father died when I was nine. My brother, my older brother, he joined the service when he was sixteen, and there was nobody at home but me and my mother and the two little sisters."

"How were you supported?"

"Well, we had some social security checks from when my father died and my mother worked at odd jobs. *I* worked for awhile, and then there was the money I stole; I brought some of that home and that's about how we got by."

"Nobody in the family ask you any questions if you brought money home?"

"No."

"But it got you in trouble?"

"Yes."

"When did you start getting in trouble?"

"About ten years ago. When I was nine. Right after my father died."

"What happened?"

"Oh, we broke into a couple of stores. I started staying out late after my father died and me and a couple of buddies, we broke into a drug store and then into a bakery. They got us for it and they sent me to Parental School."

"How long were you there?"

"I only stayed about six weeks the first time. Then I was sent back to my mother. I kept clean for about three months and then they got me for burglary again and then they sent me back to Parental School again and I did about three months. It was the same as the first time. I'd hit the same two stores, the drug store and the bakery, plus a couple a' more."

"What were you after? Money?"

"Yes, money. I was a cinch to get picked up, hitting the same two stores and, like I say, I spent three months at Parental. When I got out, I stayed out for about seven months but then they got me again for a whole string of burglaries and I was sent back to Parental School again. This time I was there for six months."

"You were a confirmed burglar at age nine, or ten?"

"Yes. We'd pick a store, look it over for a way to get in, and then break in. Always at night. It was easy enough, except the percentage is always working against you."

"How many stores did you burglarize?"

"You mean in all my life?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. I just don't know. All I know, I got away with a lot more than I got caught for."

"How much money would you say you'd taken, total?"

"Oh, I don't know. It would be hard to say. I mean, I've been at it a long time."

"A few thousand?"

"A few thousand? Oh, more than that! Easy, more than that."

"Would you say ten thousand?"

"Look, there's no reason to fool you: When I got sent to the State Reformatory it totaled forty-seven thousand, just for the ones they sent me up for. That was the total in the charges at my trial. I ended up at Sheridan."

"Forty-seven thousand?"

"Yes. They had me for something like a hundred and twenty burglaries; all told, you know. The ones they tried me on."

"What did you do with the money?"

"Oh, I lived. My family . . . I paid the rent. But I just blew it, mostly, you know. Bought myself clothes and when they got wrinkled I threw them away. I didn't have no sense of the meaning of money then."

"Have a car?"

"No, I never bought a car."

"Have a girl?"

"Yes, I had a few girls. Blew a lot of money on them."

"Where would you take them?"

"Any place I could spend money. Back when you're young, you know, when you spend big money they think you are pretty big. Wherever you could spend money, that's where you'd take 'em."

"Neighborhood girls?"

"Yes. Mostly."

"Did they know where you were getting the money?"

"Yes, they knew. A few times, they even stood in front of a store and watched out for me. Lookout."

"All for a piece of the money?"

"That's how people are. I remember I got busted back five years ago. I was with a man about twenty-nine and his son, twelve. I was fourteen at the time and there was another fellow who was seventeen. When they got us they called us the Father and Son burglars; it was in all the papers. This man had a car and he would point out a

store to us and we'd go break in, his boy, myself and that seventeen-year-old fella. We'd get the stuff the man told us to and he'd sell it. He had a place to sell all the stuff, you know. Tires at a gas station; clothes at a clothing store . . . He knew the places that would take stuff when it was hot. Take tires out of one gas station and sell them to somebody else."

"Didn't you peddle any of it yourself?"

"We didn't do so good. We would sell stuff to our friends, like watches and rings and radios; we'd sell a $50 watch to a buddy for two bucks. Stuff like television sets and that, well, we'd give some of this stuff to older fellas and they'd give it away too; you know, presents for people who were getting married in the neighborhood, stuff like that."

"What about hock shops?"

"Well, once in awhile when we needed some money bad we'd try it with a ring or something. I went into a lot of them because I looked a little older than just a kid and they never questioned me much."

"And you got rid of it all?"

"No. It kept piling up. We had a lot of the stuff stashed in a garage and when we got caught, well, there it was."

"You booted a chance to dump it all in hock shops."

"I was scared. I figured if we kept pouring the stuff in, they'd holler copper and I'd get caught again, and I had an awful fear of being caught."

"You mean that hock shops will holler for the cops on a deal like this?"

"Yes. It ain't their conscience or anything. It's just— Well, if they think you are pretty hot and will get them in trouble, they don't want any part of you."

"Otherwise they consider you a good deal?"

"Well, yes; they beat you on the price. I mean, you'd get $5 for a $100 watch. That's about how it works out. They

figure it's stolen, you know, and that you're gonna sell it no matter what they offer."

"Can't you work out a better deal with a gang?"

"I haven't got a gang. I just got mixed up with certain fellas: something was coming off and I happened to be there; that's about how it was with me. Not a real gang."

"You ever work?"

"Yes, I worked."

"After you got out of Sheridan?"

"Yes. I mean, I tried to lick the problem of stealing. I wanted to work for my money and I had three jobs: I worked for the Central Steel and Wire, at 51st and California; I worked for a neighborhood television store, delivering the televisions; and I painted screens for a contractor."

"You actually got paid for doing a job."

"Yes. And it's funny, it is harder to spend when you work for it. You don't blow it like when it is stolen, seems like you get more enjoyment out of it, when you work for it. You get the feeling you earned it and it belongs to you, you know, and you say to yourself, 'I'm not a crook no more.' You watch out how you spend it and it means something. You get pleasure out of it. 'I'm not a crook no more.' "

"You said you liked girls, that they figured you were a big shot when you spent big money on them."

"It kind of surprised me, girls and honest money. It is easy enough with honest money. It surprised me."

"Did they beef about what happened to the last of the big spenders and all that?"

"No. Well, a few of them. Mostly, no. There's bad ones in everything. But . . . well, it surprised me, I guess, to tell you the truth about it; me figuring all the while it *had* to be when they smiled and said, 'Buy me this; buy me that.' You find out you can have a girl and keep her happy with honest money, you know; even a little bit of money.

It's kind of a surprise. Although it wasn't just a little money with me because, well, I wasn't starving, you know. Like you take at Central Steel: I was just a kid, yet it was eighty a week out there for me and sometimes better."

"But you quit. Didn't you say that you quit?"

"I didn't say I quit, but I did quit."

"Why did you quit? You had everything you wanted, didn't you?"

"Listen: I was working nights, four in the afternoon until two in the morning. Don't you understand?"

"No."

"Listen: I'm young; I want to go. Four in the afternoon until two in the morning. That takes away from all of your parties, you know. It takes away from everything, and I didn't last too long out there. I started there as soon as I got out of Sheridan, and then I quit. When I got done with that, I picked up this painting screens for this contractor and that was a pretty good job 'cause I could work whatever hours I wanted to. Just paint his damn screens."

"You were lucky to hit two jobs in a row, right out of Sheridan."

"Yeah, it's hard to beat that mark. It's kind of hard because you gotta account for the years, you know. You get out and you ask them for a job, and then they ask you when did you get out of high school? Well, they can prove it on you if you lie, you know, and you tell them the last time you went to high school and they want to know what you been doing since then and you've got to account for that."

"You're trapped and you've got to tell them."

"Oh, you can lie, but if they check—and they all check—Listen, I used to gamble on it, take a chance, and they'd nail you. But if you take a chance and hope they give you credit for being honest, well, they nail you then too. I got turned down for quite a few jobs because I came right out and told them I had a record. They just look at you and you

know they figure you are too hot. They tell you they're sorry, but they just can't take a chance."

We sat silent a moment. Then I thought it time to change the tack. "Tell me about Sheridan. What do you think of Sheridan?"

". . . Well, it's nice. I mean for the inmates it's nice. For its purpose, it's nowhere. It is doing no good at all. It's nowhere. Look, I mean— When I left there the guards in the front office said that nine out of ten guys that walked out of there were back in jail within three months."

"Nine out of ten?"

"Nine out of ten, right back there in jail. They call it a reformatory, Sheridan; it don't reform nobody. You take the ones that were there when I was; everybody back in jail again, including me. Oh, maybe ten or fifteen guys on the street, but that's about it. Is that a reformatory?"

"Well, the kids you know who were there, did they sit around making plans to go back into the racket or what?"

"Listen: all the time I was out there, you can walk around into a little session where they're talkin' an' all they talk about is when they're gonna get out, how they're gonna do this and gonna do that. And they do."

"But do they?"

"No sooner do they get out than you read about them or hear about them, doing what you heard them say they were going to do. Don't let nobody kid you about a reformatory. *They* don't even call it a reformatory anymore; It's a 'industrial school.' Even the people who run it know that calling it a reformatory was no good."

"What do these boys plan at Sheridan? Penny-ante stuff, or what?"

"They plan it pretty good, pretty big. They'll try anything. That's how they get shot down and everything."

"Sheridan doesn't reform . . ."

"Listen: it just doesn't do anything for them. I mean—

Well, take my own case: I started gettin' in trouble ten years ago when I was nine. If they were gonna straighten you out, they could of got me straight in ten years, couldn't they? I mean, look at me. Startin' at the Parental School and goin' to Juvenile Home, County Jail, State Reformatory, and here I am in Bridewell. If they're gonna do something for me, they ought to of done it by now."

"And you say they didn't?"

"Hell, they didn't do a thing for me. Not a goddam thing. Nothin'."

"But after spending ten years of your life locked up, how do you account for the fact that when you got out you were willing to go look for a job? Something must have happened inside you."

"You con yourself. You think it is ended. You think because I got a job after I got out of Sheridan it's ended? Who knows it's ended? I'm doing a year, here at Bridewell; when I get out of here, who knows I won't go back to crime? I just might, you know. I'll have another year of my life to account for when somebody looks at me across the desk and asks where have I been. Each time, jobs are harder to get. And I won't be able to get into the Army because I'll still have a year's probation in front of me. You can't get a job, you can't get a decent job, with probation. You got a mark against you and even if you get a job, they're always pickin' you up; even a Stateville guy, trying to work it out as a waiter: they are waitin' there for you when you come out. Drop it for them—you know, give 'em a kick-back—or they holler on you, and the guy you work for can't stand that even if he knows all about it."

"You are talking about the police."

"Is there anybody else makes trouble for you?"

"You said they shake down ex-cons?"

"Go ask an ex-con who is trying to make out. Ask a kid from Sheridan. Ask me. They are always pickin' you up.

Why do you think ex-cons hate coppers? And kids like me? I've been picked up just for walkin' down the street."

"What do they say to you?"

"They pick you up. They say, you done this, you done that. You say no, you didn't; you say you are clean. They know you are clean, but they lock you up for a day or two. That's the most they can do. Then they let you go. But the next time they see you on a corner, they pick you up again; you done this, you done that, and then the lockup."

"This would have to be the District."

"Yeah, District cops. They don't know much about me downtown. The Bureau doesn't know anything about me."

" 'Burglary' ought to know something about you."

" 'Burglary' never bothered me. It is always the District. They know me, the District."

"A District gets a lot of heat. Look at it this way: you are lots of trouble for the District. They're not all on the make for a dollar. You know that. What would *you* do, working in a car in a district, with somebody like you on the corner?"

"I . . . well, I don't know. I never studied none of that crime stuff nor nothin'. I ain't got the faintest idea. But nobody is interested. Something could be done if they tried. I mean, look-it: this is a brand-new building here and it cost an awful lot of money, and they figure this will reform somebody or something. It won't reform nobody. Why don't they take this money and spend it and really try to reform somebody some other way? There must be a way. There's a way to do everything, they say. They spend money and they find a way to make a plane go a thousand miles an hour. They can spend the money to make a plane go a thousand miles an hour, and they can't even straighten out one kid."

"Oh, they straighten out some."

"No. Look, every jail in Illinois is crowded. Overcrowded. Prisons, reformatories, everything. Parental School, St. Charles, Sheridan, County Jail, Bridewell. For everyone

sleeping on a cot in a cell, they got one guy sleeping on the floor in lots a' these places, or on a table or a bench somewheres. It's true, ain't it? They got twice as many as they can handle in County Jail; it's true, and you know it. You can't reform nobody by makin' him sleep on the floor and tellin' him you are 'rehabilitating' him."

"Well, what are the ideas that come to you about all this? What do you think they could do that they're not doing?"

"Look, they are neglecting the purpose of it. You know what I mean. They get 'em down there to reform 'em, and they don't reform 'em. You take a guy, now, like he gets picked up for burglary, and say he is nineteen. They'll take him and put him in County Jail and they'll leave him in County Jail for three months before he goes to court, and then maybe they'll give him two years probation. So he goes home and he reports to the probation officer every month and that's the end of it. I mean, how do they reform a guy like that?"

". . . What do you think about the guys in County Jail, in Stateville? Are they much different in your opinion from those guys outside who are not locked up, guys of the same age brackets?"

"Sure they're different. They're different in lots of ways. They get a different outlook on life. When a guy gets into the reformatory, I mean . . . when he gets out, he's bitter. You got to figure he will be bitter, sorta mad at the world. These other guys you mention, not locked up, they just live a natural life. But this other guy, he be mad; you took him away from his family and all that. When *I* got out, I was pretty bitter, you know; bitter at the whole world for wastin' my life and for not doin' nothin' for me except makin' me put in time that didn't do nobody any good."

"And how will you be when you get out this time?"

"I don't know. I am on the level with you and I don't know. I hate to work. I mean, I just hate like hell to work. And when you don't work, you ain't got no money and then you start thinkin' about stealin'. But then . . . well, you know, I gotta look back and . . . well, three years in the reformatory, maybe seven or eight years in jail altogether for stealin'. It all sort of scares you. It is hard to pull time; you don't know how hard until the judge tells you you've got to pull the time. Right now, I don't know. I mean, I seem to be doin' O.K.; I'm doin' my time and that's all you can do when you're locked up is your time. After that— Well, I guess I should tell you that I will get a job and work, but I tell you the truth: I hate like hell to work."

"So maybe you are headed for more trouble."

"I've had plenty trouble."

"You were involved in a pretty bad fight before you came in here. Isn't that so?"

"You checked me out pretty good, didn't you. Yes, I was."

"Tell me about the fight."

"Well, it was at the University of Chicago. A fraternity house. And mostly it had to do with a couple of my buddies, although I got a couple of years probation out of it and that's why I got a year here in the Bridewell: they hit me for violation of that probation. As for the fight . . . Well, a couple of my buddies . . . Well, one of my buddy's father is a professor at the University of Chicago and, naturally, he knows a lotta the students and one of the students told him about this dance at the fraternity and told him to bring some of his friends and come on over. So they went to the dance and when they got in the place they gave them a couple of drinks, and a few of the other guys were drunk, students of the University, that is, and they throwed our guys out and beat 'em up. Well, our guys came back to the corner

and they got a bunch of our guys who were drunk and they went back to the University. I heard about it and I knew this one guy, one of the guys they throwed out; he's a good friend of mine and I sent him over to the dance in the first place. So when I heard about the fight that was going on when our guys went back, I went over to get this guy who is a good friend of mine because I didn't want him to get in no trouble or nothing."

"And was the fight over when you got there?"

"No. I ran up on the lawn there, where the fight was taking place, right in front of this fraternity house."

It was the spring dance of a fraternity and some two hundred young people attended. The Champ's friend, the one he sent to the dance, was an eighteen-year-old Negro boy and it appeared later that the fight began over his presence at the fraternity house. The Champ was mystified by the racial reaction of the white fraternity boys and said later, "I thought they were all big free thinkers and all that, and that they'd like the idea of having a colored kid at the dance."

The Champ laughed. "Free thinkers, hell. That's only in the classroom. They see this colored kid and the fight was on. It was a hell of a fight, I mean, with everybody swingin' bats and fence posts and everything they could get their hands on. A hell of a fight. But I wanted to get out of there because I was too hot with the coppers to take a pinch just for a fight; I am always the one they pick up when anything happens and I was already drunk so I wanted to get out of there."

"Well, nobody forced you to go there in the first place," I reminded him. "You decided that on your own."

"I did, that's true. I didn't go over there to get mixed up in the fight, though; only to get that colored boy out of there. When I got there I seen this guy, my friend the colored guy, just laying there all sprawled out, you know. He was drunk

and I guess somebody had hit him and knocked him out with a bat or something, and I bent down to pick him up and then they attacked me; the students attacked me. They were pretty hot about this guy I was tryin' to help and they gave it to me pretty bad, but all I wanted was to get him outta there and I did. Then his cousin come and picked him up in a car and we got him home and I thought that was all there was going to be about this fight."

"And you thought wrong."

"I'll say. The next morning, I went on the corner and got picked up. They threw me in jail at the District; then they pushed me into County Jail and for thirty-eight days I sat in County Jail. Then they took me to court and they give me two years' probation for taking part in the fight. There was a fellow hurt in that fight, you know, one of the students, and there was a lot of heat about it."

The court records show that the Champ's colored friend was a key figure in the attack and that he was beaten unconscious when the students caught him swinging a switchblade knife. The "fellow hurt" was a New York City boy named John A. Lloyd. He was stabbed in the back and later identified his assailant as the Champ's friend, eighteen-year-old Drew Gilmore Bey. Bey and twenty-two others were arrested and charges were placed against Bey and five of the others. The five were fined $200 and given one year's probation. Bey himself was charged with assault with a deadly weapon and given one year in County Jail by Judge Richard B. Austin, who was then Chief Justice of the Criminal Court. It was disclosed that Bey had also stolen a watch during the fight, and the Judge gave him an additional year for that.

After Bey was sentenced and there was no further likelihood of his immediate release his uncle walked into the Hyde Park Police Station and said he had information about the unsolved murder of one Carl Steen, forty-two-year-old

proprietor of a liquor store at 955 East 55th Street who was found brutally beaten in front of the establishment and who later died of his injuries. Bey's uncle told police that he and his wife had witnessed the beating and were prepared to testify against the boy if the police were interested in pursuing the matter. The police were exceedingly interested in pursuing the matter, and Drew Gilmore Bey eventually went to trial in Criminal Court on a charge of manslaughter. His relatives testified against him, as they had promised, and the boy got a sentence of one to fourteen years. When reporters questioned the relatives as to why they felt vindictive toward a boy who was their own flesh and blood, Bey's uncle said that the boy frequently had beaten him and that they were happy at the chance of sending him away; they had a deep fear of the boy and it was not until Bey drew the two-year sentence for stabbing the university boy and for burglary that they worked up enough courage to finger him for the Steen killing.

The Champ certainly knew all of this when I talked with him, but he avoided mention of the stabbing—possibly because he felt that he himself had set the stage for the stabbing by sending the colored boy to the fraternity dance in the first place. The Champ implied that he had knowledge of the Steen killing when he said, "That fight got the kid into one hell of a lot of trouble. They hit him with everything."

"But you beat the rap."

"Well, yeah, but I got this two years' probation and when I got out of County Jail on probation . . . Well, about a month later I had a little party at my house and a neighbor calls up the police— I was drunk at the time—and the police came to my house. I got most of the people out of the apartment by the time the police got there, except there were five boys left and they were drunk too and that's why I had trouble getting them out and, well, they arrested all of

us, me and the five other boys. They took us to the station and they wouldn't let me get my shoes; I was barefoot for the party, that is, and they wouldn't let me get my shoes and I went down to the police station barefoot."

"Are we getting close to the reason you're locked up here in Bridewell?"

"Yes. When I got to the station an officer said something about my mother. He said she was a drunk and . . . so I took a poke at him. He called his buddies and they came runnin' and they worked me over for a while and then they put an assault charge against me. I went to court again and they fined me $200 for disorderly and $200 for assault, and the Court ruled I had violated probation so they gave me a year on that. And that's what I'm doing here in Bridewell; a year's time for violation of probation."

"I gather from what you say that you hate coppers."

"I do. Oh, I know a coupla nice ones. That's about it. Two or three nice ones. I think the others are rotten, all of them. They got only one thing in their minds: they are out to make money."

"That's quite a charge."

"I seen it happen. It has happened to everybody. It happened to me. I mean, I was locked up in the police station for this assault and disorderly and they make my bond $300 for the assault and $200 for the disorderly conduct charge. So then they make me the offer: if I give them $10, they'd make the bond $50. Half of that for the assault, half for the disorderly. I couldn't give them the $500 and they knew it, and I wasn't gonna stay locked up because I couldn't make bond and they knew that too. So I give them the $10, and they chopped it down so's I could get out of there."

"Well, you knew when you belted that copper in the station that you were going to be in trouble."

"Well . . . I . . . He shouldn't of said nothin' about my

mother. I knew I would be in trouble when I hit him awright and there was nothin' I could do about it because I wanted to hit him."

"Did you just slap at him or did you clobber him?"

"I clobbered him good. He knew he was hit. I punched him three or four times and I knocked him down and it was then his buddies moved in. They got to me and they paid me back for it. But it was worth it, the lousy bastard."

"But here you are serving time for it. Where is the windup? What do you think your future is? If you could chart it yourself, what would you say about your future?"

". . . It looks dim, my future. It looks real dim. There don't seem to be no out for me. I mean, when I get off this year and get out, I'll still have a year's probation."

"With another year like this hanging over you."

"Yeah. If I get picked up for being drunk, I'll come right back and do another year in here, or maybe in County Jail or some place else. They could send me to prison if they wanted to. It's a felony, violatin' probation. If you just get drunk and get picked up, they got you. They've got your life in their hands; they can do whatever they want with you."

"Did you ever work with a gun?"

"No. I mean, I never got caught for it. I mean . . . Well, why kid you? I've done just about everything; every way to steal money, I've done it. Snatched purses, armed robbery, burglary, strong-arm, everything. Every way there is to get money. Most of it occurred when we're drunk, you know."

"You hit that bottle pretty hard for a young kid."

"I do. I mean, I started drinking when I was about fourteen. I broke into a liquor store and I got a lot of liquor out of it, an awful lot of liquor. So I started drinkin' and for about two years there, I was drunk all the time. And during that time, I done a lot of things almost always when I was

drunk. I don't think I would have done them, you know, if I'd a' been sober. You've got to be drunk to do it."

"Are you putting all the blame on the bottle?"

"Well I've done things when I was sober too. I was a burglar when I was sober. I snatched purses when I was sober. It's all crime, I mean; it's all stealin'. But if you're workin' with a gun, say, it steadies you if you are a little drunk."

"Do you think there is any difference between a kid who works strong-arm robberies or a kid who works with a gun or a kid who burglarizes? Is there any basic difference?"

"Well, I hate a guy with a gun, myself. A guy with a gun is a killer, just like they say. I mean, you know if somebody else points a gun at him, he can shoot them and I don't think you should carry a gun. They could shoot my own mother; somebody could stick up my mother and she could get shot, or just shot by a stray bullet. A gun is a bad thing and I'm against a gun."

"What about the guys who work with toy pistols?"

"Oh, the only reason they're working with a toy pistol is because they can't get a real gun. Or they're afraid."

"How do you feel about guys that are caught, trapped, say, and they run and they're shot by the police? Do you think they've got it coming to them or not?"

". . . I don't know. That's a funny thing. If they got a gun, I'd say they deserve to get shot. *I mean,* it's the policeman or them. Even if they've got a gun and it's empty, they deserve to get shot 'cause the policeman don't know and he's got a family, maybe a wife and kids to take care of. You see, when a guy just runs, I don't think it's fair to shoot him. I've been shot at a couple of times, but it was just up in the air; they weren't shooting at me, really. Just runnin', you know, when I was little; runnin' from a burglary or runnin' from a fight or something like that. I don't think they were shooting at me; I don't think they would. It's hard for a po-

liceman to shoot a guy in the back unless the policeman is a murderer. I mean, a guy runnin' from a store he broke into, and no gun . . . It's hard for them to shoot him."

"Did you work in just one district when you were sticking them up and burglarizing?"

"Well, stickups I went anywhere. With burglaries, I concentrated right there in Hyde Park."

"Were you scared when you worked with a gun?"

"Terribly scared. You don't know what it does to you, putting the gun on somebody. I must be yellow or something, but I don't know how those trigger men do it, walking right up to somebody and letting him have it—giving it to him again when he falls. How can they do that? Blasting a guy real close with a shotgun, in a car maybe, and then giving it to him again. God, I could never do that. They make you do it, I guess, if you're in a mob, or else they'll give it to *you.* But I could never do that."

"You worked with a gun, though."

"Yeah, I did. But I was scared. The first one: I pointed a gun at a little old lady—she must of been ninety years old—and I was more scared than her, I mean. *Key-rist,* I shook like a leaf. I wasn't the same for a week after that. I told myself that first one would be my last and I got drunk to forget about it. You're scared, you wet your pants you're so scared, but you get listening to them talk and you take out with that gun again."

"Listen to who talk?"

"Stickup men. I get listening: why spend a half hour breakin' in a store for fifty bucks when you can spend five minutes pointin' a gun at somebody for maybe a hundred."

"That's what they say."

"That's the motto. That's the armed robber's argument against the burglar; he says it's faster."

"You mean, when you're in a store for half an hour you're in danger?"

"No, it's not that. It's just the time. Why spend the time? Why spend a half hour getting a lousy fifty out of a store when you can spend five minutes—ten at the most—stickin' up somebody and maybe get a hundred? Why waste your time?"

"What's the most you ever got in one hit? In one stickup?"

"A stickup? Oh, about two hundred. I got just about two hundred in one stickup and that was the biggest. I got a thousand out of a burglary once. That burglary was my highest."

"How long did it last you, the thousand?"

"Oh, maybe three weeks. It surprised me."

"You blew it pretty fast."

"Sure. I had new shoes every day. And I mean *every day.* When they got dirty, I'd throw them away and buy some more. Everything else the same, like I had a million. I just wish I had some of that money now. I mean, money for the stuff I bought, clothes and all that, you know. I just wish I had some of that money now. Just a little bit of it."

"Don't any of you stash it when you make it?"

"Some guys do. You'd be surprised how few do, though, maybe one or two in a hundred will stash it. I had some once and I went away to Parental School for three months. When I came back it was gone. So I guess that made me give up trying."

"Somebody stole it from you?"

"Somebody just happened to find it. I had buried it and somebody just happened to find it."

"Much?"

"No, not much. Maybe fifty. But I was young, you know, and it seemed like a lot of money then. It was in small bills and that made it real money for me because I was so young."

"Real money?"

"When I was ten, eleven years old, I used to break into a store and maybe I'd get three or four twenty dollar bills out

of it and maybe five or six singles. The singles were real money. I would hide the twenties because I would be scared to spend them. I'd be scared to walk into a store with a twenty. So all I could do was give the twenty to an older fellow and he would go into the store and buy something and he'd give me maybe five singles out of it and keep the rest. He'd take the big cut of my twenty."

"Did you holler?"

"It wouldn't do you any good to holler. He knew you stole it and were scared to go get a store to break it. And he was an older fellow who could clip you if you tried to complain. I wasn't the only one it happened to: it happens all the time. A kid with big money hasn't got anything."

"Do kids consider a five is real money or a ten?"

"A kid will walk into a store with a five. Or a ten. Lots of times I walked in with a five dollar bill or a ten and I'd buy a loaf of bread and milk, a newspaper, cheap groceries, stuff like that. When I'd come out, I'd throw the groceries in the garbage can; just keep the change, you know. I threw money away. After all, I took the chance on getting caught and getting jail for it and, when I got the big bills, it scared me. And I did get caught and I did get jail and here I am serving a year—and I ain't got a quarter. I could have plenty of money set away somewhere. It doesn't make any sense that I'm serving time and I haven't got any money. I had the money I stole and I threw it away, and now I am serving time for it like all these other jerks."

"You don't give any kid who has been in trouble much hope?"

"No. They're the stickup men and the big-time burglars and the silly jerks that will be locked up at Stateville tomorrow."

"All the same? All kids in trouble?"

"You don't know what it is to be a kid and serve time. You think this is something people forget or you forget? Oh, sure,

lots of these kids know that crime is no good—that you risk your life getting twenty dollar bills you're afraid to spend."

"Maybe you get over that when you get older."

"No, it's always the same. Older guys are afraid to spend ransom money. Look at them guys that took the million dollars from Brinks' in Boston. What good does it do them when they can't spend it."

"Crime does not pay?"

"It sure don't. You can't win."

"Does that apply to all the other kids too?"

"Yes. And you know the worst part about it? Me and all of them? We have tossed our life away and we ain't got nothing for it and we got to spend all the rest of our life in some kind of trouble 'cause we ain't dead yet. And it don't seem to me that that makes any sense at all."

"No," I said. "No, it doesn't make any sense at all."

"Planes that go a thousand miles an hour! What about all the kids? . . . Well, I can tell you one thing, we'll see 'em all in hell. Why don't they do something for us? Why don't you people figure out some way to help us?"

"You don't think that people are really willing to try?"

"No, I don't and I'm not looking for an argument. But how would *you* feel if it was *you,* or *your* kid, and he was nineteen and there was no hope and nobody was really doin' anything to help straighten him out? How would you feel? Get somebody to answer that one. How would *they* feel if it was *them* or *their* kid? Answer me that one."

How do you answer that one?

11

"It seems to me . . ."

PART 1

What makes a bad boy bad?

What turns a seemingly proper girl in her mid-teens into a neighborhood slut?

How do you find the cause—and eventually the cure—for all that is loathsome among the young?

Quite clearly, adult aggressions can radically alter the decent inclinations of youngsters. I saw a well-dressed woman scream, "You slob!" and crack her tiny daughter on the head when the child tripped and fell, soiling her dress. I saw a counselor explain to a small boy about to board a bus for vacation at a camp for destitute children that he would have to surrender the two bottles of Coca-Cola that he clutched like a treasure in his hands and, when he did so, I heard his mother say, "Well, I'm glad to see that somebody can make the little son-of-a-bitch behave!"

A man is arrested for organizing teen-age boys to peddle

marijuana cigarettes at a high school, protesting with a whine, when caught, that he was only providing them with a bit of a thrill. A group of men are indicted for selling pornographic books and pictures at another high school, for inducing boys and girls to serve as talent in the making of lewd films; they weep for themselves and not for their victims, but their contribution to the destruction of youthful decency is self-evident.

In Report No. 130 of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency (pp. 9, 10), there is authentic testimony on the widespead nature of this problem:

"One of the most shocking of our investigations revealed the extent to which pornography was reaching even our very young children, and the terrible influences such filth was having on their conduct.

"After holding hearings in New York, it was estimated that the traffic in erotic photographs, illustrated playing cards, phonograph records, movies, slides, illustrated books and pamphlets, totaled $300 million to $400 million a year.

"Following hearings in Los Angeles, however, it was felt that the original estimate was far too low. There are indications that the real traffic in pornography may run higher than half a billion dollars annually.

"From testimony received by the Subcommittee it is known that this pornography is reaching the hands of children. In many instances, children are using their lunch and allowance money to pay for this filth.

"These materials portray abnormal sexual behavior as normal. They are sold to children by adults. Psychiatrists told the Subcommittee that much of the pornography was deliberately geared to the young and sexually inquisitive mind.

"The perversion of the individuals who produce this material was brought home with startling emphasis when it was learned that they no longer rely solely upon adults to

participate in the scenes involving sex which they record on motion-picture film and still photographs. Teen-agers are being enticed into participating as well, led on, in many cases, by unscrupulous adults exploiting their innocence. In one extreme case children as young as four had participated in abnormal sexual conduct before the camera. This happened within a few miles of the Senate Chamber.

"A list was compiled of pornographers unearthed during the hearings and sent to police chiefs throughout the country. As a result, raids were staged in several cities. For example, in Houston and Minneapolis large collections of pornographic materials were seized. In both cases, local police chiefs had followed through on specific leads furnished them by Subcommittee investigators. Testimony by these particular pornographers implicated witnesses who had used the Fifth Amendment before the Subcommittee in New York.

"This Subcommittee held hearings on and reported S. 599 and S. 600, which were bills designed to curb the interstate transportation of pornographic material. The final version of S. 600 was passed by the Congress, signed by the President, and is now Public Law 95."

So we struggle laboriously to build a legal fence which somehow—we hope—will brake the flow of smut which floods the land. But may we assume that wholesale pornography will cease because its distribution is now in violation of Federal Law? Only a fool could answer, Yes.

And why do big-city authorities tolerate saloons and bars that cater exclusively to sexual deviates? There were at least two such establishments in the neat, middle-class residen-

tial area in Chicago where the three victims of the celebrated Schoolboy Murder Case lived.

It was on Sunday, October 16, 1955, that the frightened father of fourteen-year-old Robert Peterson went to the Jefferson Park District of the Chicago police to report that his boy was missing. The boy had gone off that afternoon with two companions, thirteen-year-old John and eleven-year-old Anton Schuessler. Not even the Schuessler boys' parents were sure where they had gone, but presumably they had set out for a movie in downtown Chicago. It was considered likely that they had gone to a bowling alley on the northwest side, not far from their homes.

No one ever found out where they had spent the day. Their naked bodies were found on Tuesday, October 18, in a ditch that rimmed a parking area in the Robinson Woods forest preserve, out in a westerly direction from their homes. The boys had been strangled and beaten, and the discovery of their bodies touched off the greatest manhunt in the history of Cook County. Experts examined and re-examined every bit of evidence. Every known sex deviate was questioned—and the files of the special investigating unit are jammed with detailed information on the habits and offenses of thousands of such persons. As recently as May 29, 1959—with the arrest of another "hot" suspect—the police reported that 35,000 persons had been questioned in an investigation which thus far has cost one million dollars; that seventeen hundred persons were seriously considered as suspects, that one hundred and twenty persons actually had been placed under arrest at one time or another. Suspects were brought back to Chicago from foreign lands. All to no avail.

Police never found the clothing, the scene of the murder, nor any hint as to who might be guilty. Some investigators are convinced that the killer was swept up in the net but

wriggled free because of the large number of deviates interrogated. Even a good detective or police interrogator may lose the power of discernment when he must ask the same questions of a great number of suspects.

So far as investigators have ever learned, a bus driver for the Chicago Transit Authority was probably the last person to see the boys alive. The driver was "certain" that the three boys rode his bus from mid-town Chicago to their neighborhood on the far northwest side; police are inclined to believe the driver was correct, if only because a bus driver customarily takes a good look at his bus at the end of the line to make sure that passengers do not leave their property—umbrellas, packages, sports equipment—all of which cause him the inconvenience of filing lost-and-found reports.

If it can be assumed that the three boys got off this particular bus at that particular place, they were in familiar territory and less than one block from a notorious dive called Henri's. There was a pet shop beside Henri's and the boys might well have wandered down for a look at the animals in the windows.

There was a monkey in a cage near the entrance of the dimly lighted bar next door. The people who ran the pet shop reminded detectives, when questioned, that the boys disappeared on a Sunday evening, when the pet shop was not open. However, the wife of the man who owned the pet shop pointed to the monkey and speculated, "If you could get that monkey to talk, I bet he'd tell you all you want to know about it."

There is terrifying violence in any killing. The bloody details of a battle with guns are pounded into your brain if you are close by and see a fellow human shot to death. I have seen it happen more than once.

I stood with detectives near the door of a room on the lower level of the Northwestern Railroad Station, near Clin-

ton Avenue and Lake Street, on the western edge of downtown Chicago, on a summer afternoon a few years ago. A young ex-convict was trapped in the room. He had raced into it in flight, after shooting a policeman to avoid a minor traffic charge on the other side of the Loop. Finding himself trapped, he tried to shoot his way out. I watched his hopeless struggle in growing horror.

The sound of gunfire cut the silence like cracking whips, the detectives pouring fire at the door, the ex-con firing back in crazy desperation. One shot winged a policeman.

I stood there, in the safety of a concrete pillar, transfixed as the door to the room came slowly open. The young man was standing there but only for an instant. The hot pistol was in his hand and there was defiance on his face as his eyes darted everywhere, searching for one last copper to kill. Then there came the loud smash of a shotgun and the young man went limp and fell backward into the room.

When the nausea had settled inside me, I went into the room with the detective, a well-known cop, Sergeant Emil Smickals of Robbery, who had fired the shotgun. The other policeman opened a path for us, and the detective, the shotgun still under his arm, looked at the young man's torn body and face. When he turned away, I asked him, "Do you know him?"

"Yeah," he said. "We've known him for a long time. We've known him since he was a kid."

I said, "How in the name of God does a kid end up like this?"

The detectives said, "I don't know. You will have to ask the experts about that. I only killed him because he was trying to kill us."

The experts—social workers, teachers, clergy, law enforcement officers—do not face the problem as directly as the detective.

The U.S. Senate Juvenile Delinquency Committee reported on May 5, 1957, that 530,000 children appeared before the courts of the nation in the year 1956. The figure is an approximation. And there is not even an approximation of the total number of children arrested who were *not* detained for court hearings.

The Senate Committee estimates that, given the current rate of population increase, upward of a million teen-age lawbreakers will face the courts in 1965 if the post-World War II trends continue. The Committee has moved in many directions in its effort to curb and contain the problem. For example, it has sought to bar juveniles from crossing into Mexican border towns without specific permits from the U.S. Attorney General's office. The reason: "Prostitution, drunkenness, sale of narcotics and of pornography, perversion, and all forms of vice are prevalent in the towns." (Committee report quote)

The Senate Committee has found that pornography is a constant concomitant of delinquency. The exhibit material was of such a nature that the presiding chairman, Senator Estes Kefauver (D., Tenn.), declined to give it more than a cursory glance.

Latham Castle, as Attorney General of the state of Illinois, found it expedient to render an opinion with regard to the Illinois Paternity Act. The law provides, this official held, that a child shall be legitimate if a couple marry after the conception or birth of the child, and that males from fourteen to eighteen years of age and females from twelve to sixteen do not need parental consent to be married when the female is pregnant.

A seventeen-year-old parolee from Sheridan Reformatory breaks down when given a lie-detector test and admits that

he beat a fourteen-year-old girl with his fists, then drove to a lonely place just north of Glenview Naval Air Station, northwest of Chicago, and attempted to ravish the child, finally beating her with a rolling pin from his father's bakery and leaving her in a pond for dead.

A "wolf pack" gang of girls was tracked down in Chicago for the unprovoked rubber-hose beatings of two student nurses and three high-school girls who were strangers to them. They calmly explained in the presence of the unperturbed mother of one gang girl, "We did it for kicks."

Would the experts say that these and the hundreds of thousands of similar cases are individual matters? Or do they reflect a national lawlessness that is becoming chronic?

PART 2

The most realistic thinking on the whole subject of juvenile delinquency comes, it seems to me, from the harsh, cynical comments of the boys in serious trouble. Many experts on the subject make comments that are so wide of the mark as to seem grotesque. Quite obviously, a teen-age boy who has spent what should have been the tender years of his life in a reformatory cannot trust people who have no understanding of the bruises which have been inflicted on his body and soul. This may well account for his bluntness—and for the accuracy of his diagnoses.

Thumb back, if you will, through the early pages of this

book and think a moment of the things young criminals have told you:

"They don't burn you for murder if you are a kid."

"You will never be sent to a reformatory or punished for a moderate offense the first time they catch you."

"You talk to a car thief, you learn how to steal a car. You talk to a burglar, you find out how to be a burglar."

"If you ask me, they are afraid of the kids. The coppers and their folks and everybody. And the reason is, everybody's plenty dirty themselves and everybody's got a racket."

"I'm thinkin' of marryin' that little broad. You can always get rid of them when you don't want 'em. Everybody does."

"The parents—most of them—are out bumming themselves. Boozing it up. Goofing around with this one and that one. Getting plastered, chasing some guy or some broad. Everybody knows what is going on. Why blame the kids?"

"They gave me three to five years and that's a lot of time for somebody who is just turning fifteen."

"It is the family's fault when a boy is in trouble all the time. If they had a mother who was a real mother it would be different."

"They kicked me off the corner and I went out and tried to find something to do with myself. I went out and found a house to get into."

"Girls, booze, cars and things—that's the general principle of the kid's activity."

"It's a lot easier to get money by stealin' and you get more money than if you work."

"Listen, there ain't *any* kid gonna steal and raise hell without some big person hasn't got enough guts to keep him from doing it."

You may have felt a kind of horror as you read the cold, brittle comments of young criminals. My belief is that their comments are more closely centered on the target than are those of the majority of professional people who deal with

their problem. The best indication of what must be done to point us toward a solution of the problem lies in what the boys themselves reveal. They have a twisted, distorted view of life, certainly, and their alibis for bad behavior are often dishonest; yet this is what they believe, the code by which they live, and the experts must recognize that the struggle to save these boys must begin with adequate, honest answers to the naked questions their remarks have raised.

The solution to juvenile crime obviously cannot be found in words. As the experts will tell you, every boy and girl needs a good home and good parents—and vast amounts of patience when they do stupid and irritating things. Lacking the good home and good parents, they need youth clubs and camps, places where they can sink their roots and develop their bodies and minds. And even the worst of the juveniles is entitled to decent treatment when arrested and confined; you only compound his difficulties if you beat him or cheat him, or otherwise feed his hatred of society. Conversely, the boy in serious trouble must be dealt with firmly; he understands authority and he will respect it if it is honest and not brutal.

PART 3

One of the ways of getting a perspective on our problem is to take the opinion of an expert who is trying to cope with delinquency in another country. Sir Basil Henriques is the foremost British judge in the field and he was appalled, during a recent visit here, at the extent of juvenile delinquency in the United States.

Speaking with more than three decades of experience in a courtroom in a shoddy part of London, Sir Basil said: "You've got a most fearful problem, which is far more serious than we have in England and which we would not tolerate."

The British judge was startled to hear that the Family Court of Cook County is concerned with more than 6,000 juvenile cases in a single year. "This is more," said Sir Basil, "than the annual total for the whole of England."

Armed robbery cases in his court were nonexistent: it is a crime to be in possession of an offensive weapon. Auto theft was a problem but they had been able to stem it by treating even first offenders severely. A boy can be sent, on his first offense, to a Detention Centre for a period of three months. The discipline there is very strict. It aims to be a deterrent to others as well as to the defendant himself.

Strong-arm robberies by young persons under the age of seventeen are exceedingly uncommon in England. What they call housebreaking and factory breaking comprise the most active fields of juvenile crime.

When asked for comment on the fact that American boys under eighteen had faced trial in one hundred and thirty-nine cases of homicide in 1956, the British jurist said: "The quality of the crime in America and England is incomparable. In the thirty-nine years that I've sat in the East London Juvenile Court, dealing with boys under seventeen, I've never had a murderer in front of me and I can only remember two cases in the years 1953-56 in the whole of England and Wales; since then there has been a slight increase."

F.B.I. figures give stark emphasis to the difference in the quality of crime between the two nations. In 1956, summarizing reports received from 1,551 cities of over 2,500 population, the F.B.I. reported 2,088 cases of murder. Two hundred and sixty-two of these—12.9 per cent of the total—were committed by persons under twenty-one.

To put the thing in some kind of perspective: 12.9 per cent of U.S. murders in 1956 were committed by persons who had not been born when Franklin D. Roosevelt entered the White House. Prior to the great depression and the inter-

national violence that has characterized our existence since then, juvenile murder was an uncommon thing and so, comparatively, was juvenile crime in general. It would seem that the moral fractures that affect the young are by-products of the disruption and violence that affect both nations and individual men—the wars and hunger, the rumors of war and greed, the lack of love in the dealings of human beings, the capsulized despair reflected in postwar literature, particularly in the writings of Sartre. These are not purely American problems. Murder here is more common than elsewhere because we are a nation of guns. Moral corruption is universal. England has its share and who has not heard of the Izvestia tirades against thievery, drunkenness, and sloth in Soviet Russia? Moral standards are weak when people are frightened or hungry or both, and where do you find a people who does not have one affliction or the other?

We have an unusually high number of murders and other crimes possibly because we are lush, lavish, and extravagant in other things as well. Moral debilitation seems to be a waste product of the intensified tempo of our national life. Yet, there are many kinds of sin and we are relative newcomers in this business of spiritual decay. Part of our tragedy, I think, is that we are ignoring a lesson of history which is quite plain: either you evoke a moral resurgence or your decadence will squeeze you into the dust.

The humiliating truth is that there is no visible sign of a moral resurgence, not even a hint of it, either in our own country or in Britain. Every sign points that we are going the other way. Juvenile delinquency is not a symptom of our times; it is a disease of our times—producing a variety of ugly growths, depending largely upon the social conditions and economic structure of the land in which it digs its roots. There is variation in the shape and bitterness of its fruit, from nation to nation. Yet, essentially, we are confronted with the same species—admitting, if we must, that

our plant is the most prolific and produces the bitterest fruit of all.

There is one thing that is common to the type of boy or girl who comes before the juvenile courts of England and the type of boy or girl who comes before the juvenile courts of England and the type of boy or girl who comes before the courts here in the United States: they are largely unhappy children, weighted with a feeling that they are not wanted at home and filled with an urge to make somebody pay for their misery and neglect.

Human nature being the same, is there an accounting for the difference between the British juvenile and the American juvenile? Is there a reason why England has been more successful in handling its problem and why we have failed?

Sir Basil Henriques said this: "I think that the reason why we have less of it is that we tackle the *early* symptoms of criminality right at the beginning and do not wait until the boy has got really far gone before he is dealt with by the court; they are not shielded from the courts as they are here."

Elaborating on this, Sir Basil talked with us about the impression he had gained in observing the methods we use in handling the juvenile problem.

"The boy who steals an apple from a stall on the street or who is charged, often the police will 'warn' in this country. The police have the power to 'warn' in England. But this seldom happens in London at any rate. The police are after all not expert social workers and are not expected to know which trivial offences may be symptoms of serious psychological or sociological disturbance."

It is Sir Basil's opinion that the police are no more equipped to prescribe for a boy who has symptoms of antisocial behavior than a quack is equipped to prescribe treatment for influenza.

"In England, you must take the 'morally sick' boy to the

experts in the court and the boy is treated before the 'disease' becomes serious. And that's why, I think, we don't have the proportionate number of very serious crimes that confronts you."

There is a little more to it than that. The prevention of juvenile crime is emphasized in England, and one form of prevention is the large number of boys' and girls' clubs, whose individual membership is kept much smaller in England than it is here.

"In all the years I have been on the bench," said Sir Basil, "I don't recall ever having an active member of one of these youth organizations before me. When they belong to the clubs, they feel they're wanted and loved and have someone to care for them. They belong. They are given ideals and they help one another as a team to try to realize them.

"They keep the membership of the youth clubs to about a hundred and twenty, and the boy or girl is free to choose which club he wants to belong to. But in each of them, they find a friend."

The British view is that you must prevent delinquency, rather than concentrate upon punishing it. Hence, the youth clubs—"home of friendship," Sir Basil calls them.

Is the broken home the universal first cause of juvenile crime? Sir Basil said this:

"It is if you interpret the word 'broken' quite widely. A broken home is something much more than a home where the parents are separated or divorced. A broken home also is where the parents are living together and quarreling in front of the children; where the mother is out at work at times when she is needed by her children; where the mother's got children she never wanted to have. These are the main causes, in my opinion, of juvenile delinquency. All these things make a child feel inferior and children are like adults: if you are made to feel inferior you will jolly well try to prove that you are not. Youngsters often try to prove

it by doing rash and stupid things, especially if they think the chances are that they will not be caught."

This nation is woefully lacking in trained manpower to handle the flood of juvenile delinquents. Our police departments must find a great many more officers for juvenile work and must realize that they can save the community much trouble if they begin attacking the youth problem by enforcement of a curfew. The list of things which could be done, and are not being done, is endless: the beginner criminal must be isolated from the veteran and from depraved youths in the same institution; there must be some kind of state or federal work-camp program such as Camp Monterey, set up by the New York State Correction Department in April, 1958, where boys on the loose can straighten out their perspective and get the training they need for honest employment; there must be some kind of system established whereby a neighborhood can figuratively put its arms around a boy who has served time and let him know that to them he is still a human being, that people love him and want to help him; some kind of agency has to be established within each community to find jobs for the boys who have served time and are pushed back into crime by the universal rejection of the employer who would "like to help you, but I just can't take a chance."

PART 4

It is interesting that the American boys who have served time express the same intuitive need as the British. The great need, as these boys see it, is for neighborhood clubs.

One of these boys told us: "It's when they are fourteen and fifteen years old that thoughts of really doing something bad come into their minds. They are out of the Little

League and too young for somethin' else and, hell, there just ain't any place for them to go. That's where you got your trouble."

This theory seems to be in conflict with the case histories of those boys who were picked up at a younger age for serious crimes. Our youthful informant insists, however, that you can rescue a boy and set him straight—if only you will take the time.

"What it needs, I think, for these fourteen and fifteen-year-old kids is to have some kind of activity all year 'round. In the summertime, baseball; in the wintertime, you got your basketball; in the fall, you got your football and stuff like that. They could go in for boxin' or skatin' or stuff like that. I think if they had somethin' to do all year 'round you wouldn't have so much trouble."

This sounds simple. Ask him what is the bottleneck. Well—

"Cry sake, just wishin' ain't gonna start no club. Who's gonna put up the money for the uniforms and the equipment and that? You ain't gettin' these kids to go straight without you show 'em you are with 'em and that what you've got for them is a good deal. If you can't show 'em it's a good deal, you ain't gonna put it across."

"And they'll keep stealing everything in sight."

"That's right. They will. And let me tell you somethin', it ain't always because they need something. They do a lot of stealin' just for the kick they get out of it and on account they ain't got nothin' else to do."

Several months after my talk with this boy he called me, looking for help. He and nine other boys—four of them graduates of Sheridan Reformatory—had worked their way into a basketball league but were about to be excluded because they lacked the required uniforms and the means to purchase them. Through the good offices of two Chicago men who prefer to be nameless, the best of equipment was

provided. The boys were delighted and, though it may be a coincidence, all ten remained clean for quite a while—not a moment's trouble. Of equal importance, the men who produced the necessary money were more than pleased at the success of their experiment and were not disheartened when, eventually, the team leader once again got into serious difficulties. It was encouraging to hear one of the two benefactors express regret that he and the other men had not kept in contact with the team; he felt that the leader would not have become involved again if they had only kept him occupied.

The underprivileged teen-age boy is almost exclusively a neighborhood boy with a total disinterest in athletic facilities that may be available elsewhere. Here is the comment of another youngster, quite critical of the possibilities that he and his cronies could find "something to do":

"You hear about them boys' clubs? Well, they're all right, but they ain't enough. How the hell you gonna accomplish it with one club somewhere—one club with uniforms and equipment and that? Who the hell they gonna play? You got to have lots of clubs—everywhere. Lots of leagues. And who's gonna organize these other teams and where's the money comin' from?"

Did this boy know of *any* organization that supported a year-round program? No, he did not.

"People talk a lot and they go around cryin' when some kid is in trouble. But people just don't give a damn and there ain't anybody wants to help out."

Responsible men who give their money and time to the establishment and operation of boys' clubs might feel discouraged to hear comment of this kind. All over the nation, successful men are turning their attention to the establishment and operation of boys' clubs. The work that is being done in this field is important, but not nearly widespread enough to cope with the problem and, if you study the effort

of any one group, you come to the rueful conclusion that on a national scale we are attempting to bail out a sinking boat with a teacup.

PART 5

There is geographical distance between Sir Basil Henriques' juvenile court in the East End of London and the Family Court of Cook County, in the state of Illinois. But essentially, Sir Basil and Judge Harold P. O'Connell, who presided over Family Court, are of one mind in the common opinion that bad home life produces bad boys. Judges everywhere presumably would share that opinion.

Family Court, the eye of the storm of youthful problems in Cook County, is located in a triangle of white stone that also includes the Juvenile Home. Ironically and almost incredibly, a great percentage of Chicago people pass it by with no knowledge of what it is—indicating, perhaps, how little people care. Actually, this is a whirlpool of frustration and despair, a place of bitter experience for thousands of boys and girls who have gotten into trouble, and for their parents as well.

In Sir Basil's court, in East London, he is the final voice of authority. In Family Court, the power of the judge is limited. The children who face the judge in Family Court are not charged with the commission of a crime although, on a grave matter, they can be so charged in Criminal Court. In Family Court they face the judge merely on a charge of being delinquent under the Illinois statute that established the Youth Commission. This, too, is somewhat like the British system, for the Youth Commission is regarded as capable of expert handling of youthful offenders. However, because of the tremendous volume of juvenile offenders, and because the law has transferred power from the court to the Youth

Commission, the judge of Family Court is not able to deal quickly and firmly with a young defendant, as Sir Basil is able to do. The judge of Family Court may decide whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty, but it is the Youth Commission which decides what penalty, if any, should be exacted and where and how it should be paid.

"Our cases cover any act of incorrigibility," says Judge O'Connell. "They include robbery, rape, burglary, auto larceny, and just plain disorderly conduct. We get it all, provided that the boys and girls are under the age of eighteen. We turn them loose, if that is our judgment, or we find them guilty of delinquency, and then the Youth Commission fixes the sentence."

Judge O'Connell says that, like similar courts in all parts of the nation, Family Court is faced with major crimes in most cases and, in his opinion, the crimes can be traced almost exclusively to bad home conditions.

"I don't think there is any one basic cause of juvenile delinquency. There is a whole host of difficulties and conditions which lead a youngster to do things which are not in accordance with the law." That is the view of Joseph D. Lohman, a nationally known penologist and criminologist, former chairman of the State Pardon and Parole Board and former Sheriff of Cook County, and recently elected State Treasurer of Illinois.

Joseph Lohman's primary opinion is that society presently is inadequate to meet the challenge that junior criminals present.

"When we arrest a boy for a crime, we brand him and stigmatize him and treat him in such a way as to leave scars which remain on his mind and soul. He gets a conception of himself as a criminal and as one who must live forever on the other side of the law. He sees no possibility of getting along with conventional people. This attitude in which a boy is a self-conceived criminal is always the product of

how the courts, the law, prosecution, and incarceration deal with the boy who is arrested."

Lohman feels that the boy can be damaged in his home or by experience in a neighborhood where his family or his parentage, his race, color, or religion is subject to ridicule. However, and it is here that Lohman divides from the common view that the boy's home life is the basic key to his problems; he believes that the law-enforcement and judicial bodies are not handling the boy properly in the initial phases of his delinquency.

"The law must be conscious of how it deals with delinquent youngsters, so that it doesn't alienate them as a result of the procedures that are employed. Stigmatizing a boy as a delinquent may have the effect of making him a worse criminal, rather than bringing him under control."

In a prolonged seminar that he conducted for the police and law-enforcement agencies of Cook County—eighty-five of the one hundred and two communities sending representatives over a period of weeks—Lohman sought to drive home his precept that it is plain common sense for the law to take a relatively kindly view of the failings of youth and somehow to inculcate in the boy or girl in trouble a feeling of trust in the police rather than hatred.

Is Sheriff Lohman optimistic that this can be done? No, he is not.

"I am not too optimistic about what we will accomplish. But we must try. We must re-examine our procedures in the treatment of juvenile cases in the initial stages. We are building up an army of young persons who are really an 'enemy within' and the number represented as failures, because of what we have done in the past, is steadily increasing. It doesn't avail us very much if we make youngsters—as a result of arrest and detention—more embittered than they were before."

PART 6

The boy locked up in a reformatory and the professional criminal locked up in a prison cannot be regarded as the same thing. The boy's lack of experience in crime gives the people who work with convicted juveniles some hope that the boy can be reclaimed. The boy is in a learning process and, while he may be moving swiftly toward maturity in crime, he has yet to reach the final status of an experienced felon. The major deterrent to the reformation of a boy who is serving time is the institution in which he is confined. In the words of a juvenile-delinquency expert of the Cook County police, thirty-two-year-old Captain Richard W. Boone: "The boys you deal with are prisoners in a security institution and the institution is potentially a school for criminals. With help, a boy of good intention can make the grade and go out 'on the scenes,' as the boys call it, and do all right. But he has to pull against the grain."

The boy who enters an institution with the feeling that he has had enough and who aspires to an honest way of living can reach his goal. But it isn't easy.

"The conversation of the other boys, their experiences, and many of their thoughts about the future are all along the lines of criminal experience," Captain Boone says. "And this constant application of one theme takes hold of the boy in many cases, despite the efforts of institutional personnel to counter it."

The young captain, who has spent twelve years working directly at Sheridan and elsewhere with boys in serious trouble, says the big fight to save the boy begins when he gets out.

"Welfare agencies can't serve a boy of this type because first of all they are overtaxed. They have to handle too many

cases and many welfare workers are burdened with desk jobs when they should be free to spend their time with the boys. It is a rare situation in which a case worker will see the boy even twice a week. That just won't do."

What is the alternative to welfare-agency care of convicted juveniles who have been turned out "on the scenes"?

"My own view," says Captain Boone, "is that the job will have to be done in neighborhood organizations. You must give the boy affiliation with some kind of a club that will literally exhaust him with athletic activity, that will give him a sense of responsibility and a sense of belonging.

"These boys have a very real hunger for boys' clubs. It is the only thing I know, the boys' club, that will pull together the loose ends of a delinquent's existence and give him a pattern that he can follow and something he can respect. And even all this is only a partial answer to the lacks and absences of good elements in his home situation."

If you raise the question of money, the Cook County juvenile expert will agree that the dollar cost of founding and maintaining extensive boys' clubs would be high. However: "The basic need is interested manpower among the adult population. You don't have to have a great deal of social-work training to accomplish important things. The willingness to give your time and whatever mechanical skills you possess in the building of a place, and the willingness to spend time regularly with the boys after the place is built—these are the important things."

This is not theory?

"No, it has worked in many areas. I watched a group of men in a steel-mill neighborhood create a boys' club and build a summer camp, as well, out of virtually nothing but their own abilities. Money was not available; this was a neighborhood where every spare penny went for groceries. But the men who ran this organization borrowed and begged until they got the materials, and steel workers who labored

hard for most of the week gave their free time, to supply the labor.

"They didn't build a fancy club nor a fancy camp. But both were more than adequate and the boys love them both and have respect for what has been done for them and the men who did it. The boys actually worked side by side with the men—they did this together—and they were proud of what they accomplished. It is unusual to see men and boys working together, but they did and a sense of community and good will came into existence and grew and it was an inspiring thing to see."

Throughout the conversations we had with boys who had served time for the commission of serious crimes, we heard the cry that the Army was too severe in its attitude toward boys when finally turned loose. It seemed to the boys incomprehensible that they were not eligible for military service while under the cloud of parole. A large percentage of the boys had based their hopes of rehabilitation on a term of honorable service with the Army. To be rejected was akin to expulsion from society.

The boys would cry that the Army wouldn't take them, or would boot them out if they managed to get in. They complained they couldn't get jobs or couldn't keep them if they did get them. They were living under the onus of attaining respectability with all obvious avenues blocked to them. What was there left to do but steal?

Captain Boone says, "There is a lot of truth in what they say, a lot of truth in it. I have known a great many boys who have attempted to get into the service, after they have been released from an institution. Because of their records, they have been turned down. I appreciate that the Army has a grave problem here, but this categorical refusal to accept a boy who has been in trouble is not a fair answer to the problem.

"All juvenile agencies have been careful to explain to

the boys that they will not be accepted. It is all made quite clear to the boy before he makes his attempt to enlist. They never quite believe it. They will try. And when they are rejected, they react and you know how they react."

Enlistment restrictions, which were quite severe as applied to boys who had been in trouble, have been slightly relaxed since April, 1956. A notable change is the suspension of a regulation that a boy who had served time had to wait six months after the completion of his sentence before he would be eligible to apply for military service. Throughout the manpower-shortage years of World War II and subsequently, it was possible for an Army headquarters to grant a waiver to a boy who had served time on a minor offense, although it was unusual for the waiver to be granted. At present, it is permissible for recruiting stations to grant an immediate waiver to a boy who has served time for a minor offense—provided the boy has been released from confinement and is not under probation or any other form of pending legal action; and provided the boy has not been convicted more than once of a minor crime. (Minor crimes embrace such categories as drunk and disorderly, truancy, reckless driving, resisting arrest, disturbing the peace, and petit larceny.) A boy who has been convicted of a minor crime more than once must appeal for a waiver to the Army headquarters which has jurisdiction over the enlistment area.

A boy who has been convicted of a major crime (e.g.: auto theft, homicide, manslaughter, burglary and robbery) may apply to Army headquarters for a waiver and it may be granted to him, each case being decided on its own merits. A two-time loser in the major field has no chance.

In every case, it is required that a candidate with a police record stipulate what his offenses were and what his status presently is. Enlistment offices check his fingerprints against local police files as a matter of procedure. Once accepted

for service, his prints are checked against the F.B.I. files in Washington and this double check insures that the Army cannot be deceived; immediate dismissal from service is the consequence of fraudulent enlistment.

Once accepted—even though the boy may have been convicted and served time for a felony—the candidate is assigned to a branch of service in exactly the same way as enlistees who do not have criminal records. As for what kind of soldiers they make, a 5th Army recruitment spokesman says: "They go both ways—good and bad. Their rate of performance is not as good as that of boys who have not had criminal convictions, but the heavy majority of those granted waivers serve satisfactorily."

The Army has been regarded as a haven because it offers many of the things that were lacking in the boy's home: food, shelter, and a degree of pride; other humans the boy can cling to and share life with; reasonable activity and recreation; rewards for service well done. These are just the things the boy did not have at home in most instances and whatever he did have at home turned him sour.

"I would say that 85-90 per cent of all the boys I have come in contact with," says Captain Boone, "have been products of either broken homes or homes where there is a great deal of antagonism and fighting and misunderstanding between the parents.

"If shattered home life is a basic cause, and I think it is, you cannot send a boy who has served time back to his home and expect a reformation. You must find substitutes. The Army would stabilize many of these boys. When a boy matures sufficiently, marriage is actually a fine stabilizing factor, largely, I think, because it gives the boy an association he can be proud of. But, in the main, the boy's rehabilitation is entrusted to people like myself who are supposed to know something about it."

Does Captain Boone feel he knows something about it?

"Yes, I think so. There are many dedicated people who are doing a great deal and there are a great number of well-intentioned people who have a misconception of the problem and are basically unsuccessful.

"One of the great handicaps comes in establishing a rapport with the boys. There are very few of these boys who will talk to a stranger, because they do not trust a stranger; once they are in trouble, they are inclined to trust no one.

"They place their confidence in other boys who are locked up with them. And their sympathies are always for the boys who are serving longer terms than they are. It is not strange to note that when a boy gets a sentence of two, three or four years and lives beside a boy who gets, say, thirty-four years, the boy with the lighter sentence feels great regret and sadness over leaving the other fellow behind.

"The boy who serves a short term and leaves an institution does not forget one who is serving a long term for murder. An institutional experience is branded on a person and no matter how hard a boy tries to forget, it all lives with him: his life there, the boys he has met—and the boy he left behind who is going to be there for a long, long time. That boy goes on living with the one who gets out."

As for the boy who gets out, his mind is filled with an imbalance where foul things take on the appearance of good and the struggle for his reform is just then beginning.

"It is not an easy job to work with a boy who has been in serious trouble. It takes a great deal of time and it is a time when you are doubtful as to whether you are really reaching the boy, whether you are getting anywhere with him.

"Doing something for a boy who is just out of an institution is not a one-day-a-week job. It isn't a 'Sunday' job or a part-time job. It is a constant and, in many cases, a nerve-

racking job in which you must fight yourself to keep self-control because the boy will do unexpected things that will turn you against him.

"Worst of all," says Captain Boone, "this is the kind of job that doesn't have a foreseeable ending. It doesn't cease in a month or two months. It may go on for years, with you in doubt all the way as to what the outcome will be. I've had boys I dealt with over a period of three and a half years, seeing them several times a week, getting them out of minor scrapes, putting them back on the track when they wandered off—and I still don't know if they're going to go straight or not."

Sometimes, according to Captain Boone, the first you know that you have failed is word that confronts you on the front page of the morning newspaper. Your boy has shot and killed somebody or he has been killed or arrested on a grave matter. And sometimes, when the boy is in despair, all your work can disappear—or bear good fruit—without warning.

"There was one boy I worked with for several years for whom nothing ever seemed to go right," Captain Boone recalls. "Finally, out of a job and terribly discouraged, he got a .38 and decided to go back to robbery.

"He boarded a bus and headed for a large city, hoping to make a haul and come home again for a big fling. Fifteen miles from the city, this boy made the greatest decision of his life: he got off the bus and threw the gun into a ditch and hitchhiked back home again, empty-handed. He came to my house and told me all this and I believed him. I was glad, I was happy for him. He had won the battle—or perhaps I can honestly say that *we* had won the battle.

"It is wonderful in this kind of work to have a winner. It makes you feel that all the disappointments you have had are worth it."

You do not always win and sometimes you lose the very battle that you have striven your utmost to win.

"There is the case of another boy that comes to mind," the Captain says, "a boy I worked with at Sheridan who came from terrible home conditions. The worst. At one time, his entire family—father, mother, sisters and brothers—were all locked up on various charges. His mother was a prostitute, his father was a drunk. Putrid people. And this boy's only chance was to get located in a decent home. We simply could not send him back to a home like that.

"We delayed his parole. I am not much for foster homes because people who take in children are mostly interested not in the boy but in the money they get for it. But it is possible to find good people and finally we found an ideal family that was willing to accept this boy and care for him and give him all the tenderness he had never had and badly needed.

"Feeling quite wonderful about all this, I called the boy in to tell him about his good fortune. The boy sat wide-eyed as I explained the plan. Finally, the boy arose and he was trembling and he pointed a finger at me accusingly and he shouted: 'Are you crazy? I'm going home. I'm going home!' "

PART 7

The notion is widespread, or so it seems to me, that juvenile delinquency is an unfortunate occurrence exclusively centered in families of the poor. This is not true. Misery most assuredly is a by-product of want and the germ of criminality prospers in the frustrations of a frightened and badly educated immigrant family or sub-marginal-income family or disaster-struck family. The possession of money, on the other hand, is no guarantee of a family's peace and content-

ment; wealth, education, and social position are no guarantee that a child won't get into serious trouble. In searching for the cause and cure of delinquency you cannot ascribe your conclusions to either of the two extremes, poverty or plenty.

Vast numbers of our priests and nuns, rabbis, honest businessmen and men of stature in the professions were children of the poor. Conversely, violent transgressions frequently are committed by the sons and daughters of the rich. There is one difference, to be sure: the poor child who gets in trouble customarily will be treated more harshly by the police and another authorities than the child of a rich man; the people who administer the law are deferential to families of wealth and influence. A poor boy arrested for a sadistic murder can reasonably expect to be detained and interrogated for a long period of time, to face trial on the confession he eventually makes and to be executed for the crime. A rich boy arrested for the same type of killing will be surrounded by legal counsel, protected by writs, and eventually may cheat the electric chair on the strength of a lawyer's eloquence and a judge's deference to his family's eminence. The law-enforcement people even have a word to cover this kind of situation; they say the boy has "clout." Obviously, a poor boy has no clout, but who can say that the family of a Nathan Leopold or a Richard Loeb has gained anything by employing a Clarence Darrow to save the life of their boy—at a cost of sickening notoriety for all members of the family, until by death they finally are freed?

Dismissing the easy and erroneous conclusion that wealth or the lack of it is a key to the answer of why a youngster gets in trouble, I keep coming back in my mind to the ten boys who talked their hearts out to a stranger. The one thing common to all of them: they had no contact, no rapport, with their fathers. It would be a ridiculous mistake to conclude that every boy who loses his father ends up in crime. Al-

most invariably, however, every boy who stumbles into wrong doing in the confusing hallways of life has first of all become separated from his dad. At the very best, it seems to me, the father is too preoccupied with his business and tries to cross the void between himself and his son by handing over substantial sums of money. At the very worst, the father has died, or the father himself is in crime, or the father has run away from his family for another woman or from the pressures of trying to provide for his family, or the father has turned into a lush and having him near you is worse than having him gone or dead.

Where would Mustache have ended up if he had gone through his formative years hand in hand with his dad? Or the Champ or the Great Magoo, or One Arm, or The Loner?

You see benchloads of sullen teen-age thugs in the police stations and the courts and the reformatories and you wonder—where are their fathers, what did they do for them?

A boy is shot and killed in a robbery and you look at him, sprawled out on the floor, the dirty gray of death creeping over his face and hands, and that question hits you: where is his father?

The experts who come closest to "doing something" about juvenile delinquency are those who accept the disappointing truth that there is no secret cure, and I do not mean to imply that solely through the medium of good fathers the problem will cease to exist. I mean only that a father who is worried about his boy might keep in mind that a child that gets affectionate care, like any living creature, will do better than a child that doesn't. And this worried father might remember that if he fails to provide an anchor for his boy, the boy will drift into deeper waters. The boy—his boy, every boy—hungers for peace of soul; he is starved for a hero and the boy who is caught up in the law will center his adulation on someone like himself, older than himself, who has scorned the law and apparently made it pay. This boy's

hero is not a pink-cheeked gentleman in a Brooks Brothers' suit, driving out of Wall Street or La Salle Street in a black Cadillac with liveried chauffeur. *This* boy's measure of success, since he has served time, is an Olds convertible of present year, paid for in cash by a perfumed roughneck in a two-hundred-dollar jacket and a white Borsalino hat; an arrogant postgraduate of the criminal school, an ex-con, who has come back to The Neighborhood in testament of the gospel that only suckers work for a living.

The tragedy is that this boy once dreamed gloriously of a different kind of idol: he wanted a good father.

There is tremendous power in the love of a father for his son, and the son for his father, and one wonders if the simple truth and beauty of this is slipping away from most of us in this era of material accomplishment.

Sadly, it is well beyond hope that *all* boys can be saved from serious trouble. Happily, there is unlimited opportunity for most fathers to protect and shelter their own. The requirements may be great. The father must have the prudence not to separate himself from his family as he battles for success. His family needs his presence, the evidence of his concern, and looks to him as an example of courage. He must be patient and sober and brave; he is weighted with responsibilities which he may not shirk and expects somehow that his son will show those qualities which he himself lacks. The father must accept the elemental truth that his child is not a shark who can fend for himself but a curious and normally confused boy, needing love, companionship, understanding, and who needs desperately—the sympathetic help of his father.

There are many things that could be done that are not being done for teen-age boys who live and play in the shadow of serious trouble. There are many things that can be given to the boy. The greatest need of a growing boy, it seems to me, is the need of a home that is really a home; a

place which houses people he loves and who truly love him —a place that gives him the right perspective and confidence to go sailing, as he must, out into his part of the world, a place which renews him with contentment and a sense of well-being when he comes sailing home again.

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reveal the terror and tragedy of their already wasted lives. Articulate and candid, they indicate the extent to which tangled home lives, social and financial insecurity, lack of parental and community supervision, and contempt for the law and its representatives have shaped the course of their lives. Their answers to Len O'Connor's searching, intimate questions, point up the desperate need for help in rehabilitation —a help that must be forthcoming quickly from an enlightened public.

They Talked to a Stranger sharply reveals the facts of juvenile delinquency; the lack of recreation facilities and supervision, the indifference of society until the situation is almost past remedy and the alarming extent to which the problem affects almost every community. It is, however, the question of individual responsibility that Mr. O'Connor probes most intensely. On this basis and armed with sensible, practicable suggestions, he speaks directly to every parent, every teacher, every enlightened citizen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Len O'Connor who appears as the 'Stranger' on the jacket front, was born in Chicago and was graduated from St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa in 1935. Since 1940, Mr. O'Connor has been a newscaster for NBC News in Chicago. During World War II he served with a medical unit of the 63rd Division in France and Germany. At war's end, he published a G. I. newspaper for the 100th Division at Stuttgart. He was twice presented with the Sigma Delta Chi Award for outstanding public service, one time for a narcotics series called "The Black Mark," and once for "They Talked to a Stranger." He has received a dozen awards for "Stranger," including a unique citation from the National Parole and Probation Association. He is married and has five children.

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FROM THE INTRODUCTION

By SENATOR PAUL H. DOUGLAS

THIS IS A REMARKABLE BOOK by a remarkable man. Len O'Connor is a veteran Chicago reporter who, in appearance and superficial manner, seems to be modeled upon the traditions which Ben Hecht made famous thirty years ago in *The Front Page*. It would be hard for anyone to lie successfully to Len . . .

Over forty years ago, one of our wisest and noblest citizens, Jane Addams, in her *Spirit of Youth and City Streets*, stressed the need to make virtue attractive and indeed thrilling to youth, and not to allow the devil to have all the best tunes. We have not risen to the challenge of her life and writings.

It would be unpardonable if we were to continue in our slothful and callous indifference to the causes and consequences of what Len O'Connor here reveals. For the bright possibilities of infancy and childhood were never meant to flow into such poisonous cesspools as these.

A whole army of boys and girls speaks to us in these terrible pages. Would that their sordid stories might awaken our con[illegible]iences and cause us to act boldly, constructively and [illegible] affection for the children of God who are now so [illegible]ed astray, but who are the most precious potential [illegible]which life gives to us.

Paul H. Douglas